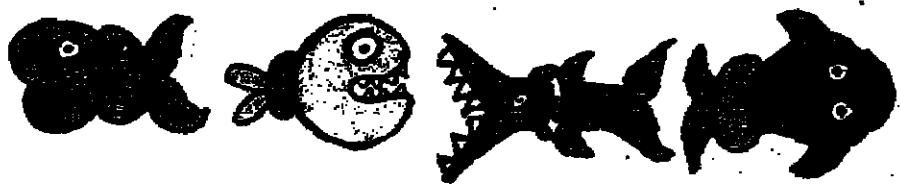




Children's Books for Summer



thelongweekend pages 8 & 9

Karen Krizanovich: Nauseating desires

New column page 18

STARTING TODAY

FREE: Enjoy a Thai food dish up to the value of £8

thelongweekend

Ulster rides a rollercoaster of relief and fear

In Northern Ireland these days one emotion has hardly time to take root before it is rudely shouldered out of the way by another. The dread before Drumcree was afterwards replaced by depression; yesterday it was suddenly superseded by an exuberant euphoria.

The hope is that the huge sense of relief generated by the Orange Order's dramatic decision not to press ahead with four contentious marches today, July 12, the most hallowed day in their calendar, will endure, and will not abruptly supplanted by some less pleasant feeling.

That decision transformed the atmosphere - "Do you know," said one woman wonderingly, "people are walking up and down the Lisburn Road smiling." Protestants seemed as pleased as Catholics, although there is a political shadow for them in the fear that another piece of their Protestant heritage has been chipped away.

The Orange decision was breathtaking in that it came out of the blue, and in that it had so few precedents in the Order's two-century history, a history characterised much more by the single-minded determination to march than by any pragmatic flexibility.

Instead of assembling in Londonderry where thousands of Bogsideers were prepared to stage protests, up to 20,000 Orangemen will gather at nearby Limavady, where there is no chance of confrontation. In Belfast, the march scheduled



By David McKittrick

for the bitterly contested Lower Ormeau has been called off, together with two more minor parades elsewhere.

While the decision was taken by many of the Order's senior figures, yesterday brought signs of serious dissension in the ranks. In particular, the important County Grand Lodge of Belfast deplored the move, calling on David Trimble to lead the Ulster Unionist Party out of political talks in protest. He is unlikely to do so on this issue.

Joel Patton, of the militant Spirit of Drumcree ginger group, issued a direct challenge to the Orange leadership, which he accused of showing "complete incompetency [sic] and cowardice". His call for Orangemen to "make their views known at the demonstrations" may lead to heckling at today's parades and will provide a test of the strength of feeling in the grassroots.

The Rev Ian Paisley, who is not himself an Orangeman but has influence in the ranks, was furious: it was a complete and total sell-out, a decision of surrender; it was Munich 1938 all over again.

The decision appears to have been taken primarily on security grounds rather than political considerations. When the Royal Ulster Constabulary Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, was invited on Thursday to the House of Orange, the Order's Belfast headquarters, he delivered a sobering and highly convincing security assessment.

It might have gone something like this: that with up to 75,000 Orangemen on the move right across Northern Ireland, there simply are not enough police and troops to guarantee their safety and the maintenance of public order. With Orangemen mustering at 18 major centres, there will be scores of "feeder" marches before the main demonstrations and scores more afterwards as they parade homewards.

There was the possibility of clashes with various nationalist residents groups; the possibility of the small but ruthless Irish National Liberation Army shooting at Orangemen; the possibility that disorder which began at one spot could spread all over. With the security forces at full stretch, the nightmare scenario was that of unpoliced sectarian clashes.

Noel Liggett, who as district master of Ballynafeigh was a key figure in deciding to abandon the Lower Ormeau pa-

rade, spelt out some of this when he said: "In the past I have been very sceptical of Mr Flanagan, but he clearly indicated to us that there were elements within the republican community who were looking to create the maximum amount of civil disorder. The final bottom line was that there was a significant opportunity of a loss of life, and at the end of the day we felt under those circumstances it would not be right to proceed with the parade."

The decision leaves many issues unresolved: a pessimist might point out that the Order preferred to make a unilateral decision, even one that went right against all its cherished traditions, rather than enter dialogue with nationalists.

But last night most in Belfast were simply overjoyed that the decision went a long way to ensuring that the Twelfth could pass off without major disorder. That was certainly the overwhelming sentiment yesterday at St Malachy's Catholic church, close to the Lower Ormeau, where a congregation gathered for a mass of thanksgiving for the unexpected Orange decision.

Father Anthony Curran said it was "a wonderful decision, a great move and everybody in this community will be delighted". It is not often that a Catholic priest acclaims a decision of the Orange Order as a miracle, but that was exactly the word Father Curran used: a miracle.

Oh dear me, there goes £67,000



Honey pot: I'm not throwing it, I'm dropping it. Eeyore - one of a series of EH Shepard Winnie the Pooh illustrations that were sold for £205,000 at Christie's yesterday. This drawing sold for £67,500, more than four times its estimated value

Pound climbs over DM3

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Anybody who postponed buying their holiday francs last week will get the equivalent of an extra *café au lait* for every £100 they exchange this morning.

In the aftermath of the Bank of England's decision to raise interest rates on Thursday, the third increase in three months, currency traders in the City of London decided a fourth rise was on the way.

As a result they bid the pound higher, sending it surging on the foreign exchanges yesterday. For the first time in more than six years, the pound was worth three Deutschmarks. It gained four pence in value during the day and also climbed 20 centimes against the French franc to reach FF10.20.

This is grim news for industry because it will make British exports more expensive. But British holidaymakers travelling in Europe will be better off than last summer. One pound is currently worth about FF110 compared with FF88; Lire2,900 compared with L2,400; and 250 rather than 210 Spanish pesetas.

'I really, really care about ... what was the cause again?'

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

"It's a bit like going into a boxing ring - there's nowhere to hide ... Or like being in a cage. People are prodding you, asking you for autographs but it's part of the deal," says Rory Bremner.

No charity can compete in a pressured world now without celebrity endorsement - but the biggest showbiz personalities are receiving in excess of 50 requests a week, according to agents.

Even Camilla Parker Bowles has taken the plunge - becoming a patron for the National Osteoporosis Society, and Thursday's Countryside March saw Jeremy Irons and Paula Hamilton rally to the cause.

The result can be huge amounts of free publicity - the Health Education Authority (HEA) estimates it received "tens of thousands of pounds worth" for its nutrition drive when it secured 30 radio interviews for Ken Hom, the chef, at Chinese New Year.

But when times are hard and the competition is so severe that celebrities are having to cut back on what they do. Otherwise no sooner have they unbuckled the pads at the cricket match than it's on with the stand-up comedy and over to the barbecue. Or such was the case this week at the Allan Lamb and John McCarthy cricket match in the grounds of Althorp house, in aid of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, and the Cystic Fibrosis Holiday Fund for Social Workers.



Cause celeb: Rory Bremner plays cricket for charity. Photograph: Keith Dobney

down to marketing. If you don't have proper marketing people don't take charities seriously. People don't listen unless there is a celebrity there," says comedian Rory Bremner, one of the celebrity cricketers.

"I wouldn't describe myself as Mr Charity," added Ian Hislop, who was also attending, at the invitation of John McCarthy. "I could do nothing else all year but I limit myself to things that mean something to me."

He prefers to help a leukaemia charity and a hospice, both of which have personal significance, but often fail to grab the attention the more "glamorous" charities do.

"We do live in an age where charities have to function increasingly as businesses and the value in terms of news coverage and awareness of using a celebrity is obvious," said Helen Fielding, who has produced documentaries for Comic Relief and is author of *Cause Celeb*, a novel about the celebrity-charity link.

"It is very important that celebrities should be well informed, responsible and effective messengers, but there's no reason to get a downer on them *per se*."

Charities must learn to pick their celebrities carefully, agreed Jenny Hay, head of press for the HEA. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals were also less than amused when Naomi Campbell, who had previously declared "I'd Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur" for their campaign, strutted down a Milan catwalk wearing animal skins.

The publicity agent Max Clifford advises charities to secure Diana, Princess of Wales as the sure-fire way to get column inches, or failing that Cherie Booth, wife of the Prime Minister, whose profile is also good at the moment. Otherwise, charities should be lobbying George Clooney, Oasis or the Spice Girls.

QUICKLY

Hope of BA deal

There were hopes of a compromise in the British Airways cabin crew dispute yesterday despite the industrial action causing a third day of severe disruption. Page 4

No earthly rewards

A sacked priest was told by the Court of Appeal that he could not pursue a case alleging unfair and racially-motivated dismissal because his boss, God, was not of this world. Page 3

CONTENTS

THE BROADSHEET	
Business & City	20-22
Comment	17-19
Foreign news	11-15
Gazette	16
Home news	2-10
Leading articles	17
Letters	17
Obituaries	16
Saturday Story	18
Shares	22
Sport	23-30
THE LONG WEEKEND	
All Consuming	19,20
Arts	4,5
Books	6-9
Games	2
Gardening	17
Money	22-28
Motoring	21
Travel & Radio	30
Weather	10-16

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CHILDREN IN NORTH KOREA ARE DYING

After three years of devastating floods, a generation of children in North Korea are on the brink of death. Malnourished and chronically hungry, they are desperate for food.

UNICEF is the only children's agency working in North Korea. We are now distributing essential foods - such as high energy milk - and basic medicines. But as each day goes by, more and more children are in danger of dying.

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significant shorts

Prison chiefs may use Army camps to house inmates

Prison officials are examining six Army camps as possible sites for new jails to help ease the overcrowding crisis. The use of Ministry of Defence property for makeshift jails is the latest scheme by the Prison Service which is becoming increasingly desperate to find new accommodation for inmates. The population yesterday went above the 62,000 mark for the first time.

As well as expanding the housing in existing jails officials have drawn up emergency contingency plans that include using more prison ships. However, this is seen as a last resort measure. A Prison Service spokesman said officials were "at a very preliminary stage at looking at the potential of an Army camp" to house prisoners. But before any building can begin they will almost certainly have to overcome any local opposition which has already thwarted an attempt to use a former RAF base. **Jason Bennetto**

Priests were victims of sex abuse

Seven per cent of Catholic priests have suffered child sex abuse as boys and one-third of sex abusing clergy are paedophiles, a conference was told yesterday. Terence McCarthy said that at least two priests within the Roman Catholic diocese of Clifton in the west of England, where he runs a church child protection team, had disclosed they were sexually abused as children. The diocese has appointed a child protection officer and drawn up guidelines and policies to tackle the issue. However, he told the British Association For The Study and Prevention of Child Sex Abuse and Neglect's conference in Edinburgh that abuse is more widespread.

"When a priest stands up on a Sunday and speaks to a congregation of 300 adults, around 47 of those adults will have experienced some sort of child sex abuse. We don't know how many priests are sex abusers. Of priests who sexually abuse, around a third of them are paedophiles," he said.

Shell to recycle gas platform

Shell has removed its 6,000 tonne gas platform *Leman BK* off the coast of East Anglia after a nine-month £11m operation which has been dogged by rough seas and technical fault. The last component, standing in 109 feet of water, has been lifted from the sea by a gigantic crane and shipped to Teesside in Cleveland, where 99 per cent of the platform will be recycled. **Ben Field**

Aga Khan's £6m anniversary gift



The Aga Khan has donated £6m to a British-based institute of religious and cultural studies. The grant, to the Institute of Islamic Studies in London, was one of several gifts totalling £31m handed out by the Aga Khan (pictured) to mark his 40th year as Imam – spiritual leader – of the world's 15 million Ismaili Muslims. It will go towards an endowment to enhance the financial capacity of the institute, which was founded by the Aga Khan. The Institute works to promote scholarship and learning relating to Muslim cultures and contributing to a better understanding of their relationship with other societies and faiths.

265m take virtual trips to Mars

Roughly 265 million people have gone to Mars in the past week – at least, virtually, by visiting the Internet sites set up by the US space agency Nasa to show pictures and results from the *Pathfinder* mission. Among the sights (at the sites) is a virtual reality simulation of the lander and its immediate surroundings, using the photographs taken at the scene; the computer program lets the viewer swoop around and view the scene from any angle. The Nasa scientists are using it to interpret their results so far and plan the rover's next moves, after crashing it into a rock on Thursday night.

Each day, the 19 sites on the World Wide Web showing pictures and data direct from Mars have received roughly 45 million "hits" – individual requests for files or information – from Internet users around the world. The number is a new record for sustained interest in a single event on the Internet, though the record for a single day is still held by the interest shown in the American election results last November, when 50 million people accessed a site run by the US news network CNN. **Charles Arthur**

Hunters seek right to chase deer

Deer hunters will launch a High Court bid on Monday for the right to continue chasing deer on National Trust land. They are to ask a judge for permission to challenge a trust decision not to renew deer hunting licences from the end of last April. Seeking leave to apply for judicial review, they are expected to argue that the decision taken by the trust's council on 10 April was reached unfairly. They say they have a "legitimate expectation" that, unless and until deer hunting is outlawed, the trust would not seek to ban it on its land. They will also ask for an injunction to stop the ban being implemented pending a full High Court hearing.

Death-fall friends released on bail

Three friends of a man who died in a fall from an apartment balcony in Ibiza were yesterday released on police bail pending further inquiries following their arrest in connection with his suspicious death. A Devon and Cornwall police spokesman said that Russell Brand, Jason Barrow and Stephen Gagg, all 23, who were arrested at their homes in Barnstaple, north Devon, on Thursday, in connection with the death of Jamie Morgan, 22, must report back to Charles Cross police station, Plymouth, on 30 July. Mr Morgan, also from Barnstaple, died from multiple injuries after falling 40 feet at the El Moro apartment block, San Antonio, on 23 June, about 24 hours after his arrival on a Club 18-30 holiday.

Penicillin mould fetches £14,950

A sample of the mould from which Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin fetched £14,950 at Christie's in London yesterday. The mould, in a wooden box with inscribed brass plate, was bought on behalf of the Science Museum in London.

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people



Supermodel Claudia Schiffer (above) admitted last night that she was paid to appear at the event where she first met the US illusionist David Copperfield. But she says she was not involved in the Paris Match magazine that their relationship is a "cynical attempt to boost her career". Schiffer's publicists Rogers and Cowan said in a statement: "The claim that Claudia Schiffer and David Copperfield have a contract or any sort of financial arrangement to pretend to be in love is 100 per cent false."

Parker Bowles to escape prosecution over car crash

Camilla Parker Bowles will not be prosecuted over a car crash in a country lane while driving to the Prince of Wales's Highgrove Estate, it was announced yesterday.

The Crown Prosecution Service has decided that there is insufficient evidence to bring charges over the head-on accident involving Mrs Parker Bowles, 50, and Carolyn Melville-Smith, 53, last month. Neither woman was seriously hurt in the collision between Norton and Easton Grey, near Malmesbury, Wiltshire.

Mrs Melville-Smith, of Easton Grey, whose Volvo estate car turned on its side in the accident, leaving her trapped by her skirt, which was caught in the car door, claimed Mrs Parker Bowles "appeared like a missile" at the wheel of a Ford Mondeo before the impact.

Mrs Parker Bowles left the scene of the accident to use her mobile telephone to call the ambulance service and police from a nearby hill. She then called the Prince of Wales, who was expecting her for dinner at Highgrove House, his Gloucestershire home.

He sent his own police bodyguard, to the scene with two of his valets and two other members of staff. Mrs

Parker Bowles told the police she had not remained at the scene of the accident or exchanged details with the other driver, as required by law, because she was concerned about the security risk.

Mrs Melville-Smith, an interior designer, of Easton Grey, said yesterday: "I don't want Camilla to be prosecuted because it won't get me anywhere. So long as I am not left out of pocket I am happy to let the matter rest. At the moment we are sorting it all out through our insurance companies but if I don't get full compensation I think I will write to Camilla. It would be really bitchy if I did pursue it because Camilla has a hard enough time anyway and she would only get more bad press."

The decision not to bring charges was partly due to Mrs Melville-Smith's refusal to make an official complaint. However, even she had complained, it is understood that there was still insufficient evidence to bring charges. A police spokesman said: "There were no independent witnesses to this accident and the evidence available at the scene, such as skid marks and other marks, when taken in isolation, was not sufficient to justify or support a prosecution."

Netanyahu cools controversy over sex allegations

Sarah Netanyahu, the controversial wife of the Israeli Prime Minister, has asked an Israeli court to bar publication of audio tapes and letters held by her first husband.

In an Israeli TV interview earlier this month, the Prime Minister's wife had accused her first husband, Doron Neuberger, of secretly recording some of their conversations. Mr Neuberger has said he planned to write a book about Mrs Netanyahu.

Mrs Netanyahu has also apologised to Israel's outgoing consul-general in New York for reportedly suggesting that the official had an affair with the former Prime Minister, Shimon Peres.

While taping a TV interview last month, Mrs Netanyahu reportedly lost her temper when asked whether she used her husband's admitted infidelity as leverage. At Mrs Netanyahu's insistence, the angry exchange was edited out of the broadcast.

But newspaper reports quoted her as suggesting infidelity was rife among politicians and many of them had propositioned her.



"Where do you think Shimon Peres spends the night when he is in New York?" she reportedly asked the interviewer. That was widely interpreted as an allusion to Collette Avital, Israel's consul-general in the city.

The TV station said that in a letter to Ms Avital, Mrs Netanyahu wrote: "As you have no doubt heard, I apologised in the media for any offence which I may have caused when I got angry over provocative questions put to me in the TV studio."

Mrs Netanyahu has been hounded by unfavourable publicity since her husband was elected Prime Minister last year.

Teacher wins her case but loses job

A dance teacher yesterday won her claim for unfair dismissal against the Royal Ballet School – but she will not get her job back.

Ms Linda Goss had alleged that she was fired in 1996 because she repeatedly alleged that children were bullied and mocked by staff. But an industrial tribunal in Croydon, south London, while agreeing that she was unfairly dismissed, said it was because the school needed to make changes in staff, not through victimisation after her complaints.

Ms Goss, 44, of Victoria Road, Darnmouth, Devon, asked for her old £27,000-a-year job as a ballet teacher back. But the school refused, saying it would be "totally inappropriate" because she was no longer trusted because of the claims she had made.

The tribunal supported that view and instead she was awarded £11,300 in compensation.

It had ruled that she was unfairly dismissed from the top school because staff had not discussed the matter with her or given any consideration to redeployment at the school.

Unhappy ending for spaced-out drugs bunny

It is a cautionary anti-drugs story for our time. Bonkers the cannabis-munching rabbit died when he was too stoned to escape the clutches of a Staffordshire bull terrier.

The RSPCA investigated whether it was cruel to get the six-month-old bunny high. But it was straightforward drug charges which landed his owner Gillian Brown before magistrates in Bridgwater, Somerset.

The court was told that unemployed Brown, 32, grew cannabis alongside the M5 in Huntworth near Bridgwater. But she claimed it was of poor quality and fed it to the rabbit.

Brown explained after the hearing: "Bonkers was a lovely, gentle creature – a bit like Dillon out of the *Magic Roundabout*."

"He would eat it like grass, get high, crash out for a while, then come back for more. He didn't like resin, but would

happily munch away on cannabis bush. He would have cannabis for every meal from breakfast at 7am to an evening meal.

He didn't seem to like carrots and would leave them – but he loved his cannabis ... and did not show any signs of being hurt by it."

Robin Walker, a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, said it would have done him no harm.

"It could have affected his memory – but rabbits aren't too hot on poetry anyway."

He said he had not met a doped-up rabbit before but had once seen an Italian whippet on LSD.

In court, Brown admitted possessing cannabis worth £350 and a small amount of amphetamines and was ordered to do 50 hours' community service and pay £40 costs.

Louise Jury

Robin Walker



RABBIT PHIGH

briefing

GAMBLING

Casinos turning the tables after Lottery setback

Casinos, bingo halls and scratchcard operators are fighting back against the National Lottery, according to figures published yesterday.

A total of £2.6bn was swapped for chips in casinos in Britain last year – up 2 per cent on the year before, according to the annual report of the Gaming Board for Great Britain. Stakes in Britain's 850 bingo halls rose 7 per cent to nearly £1bn and the amount of money spent on registered scratchcards and other lotteries shot up 50 per cent to £115m.

Board spokesman Tom Kavanagh said: "The National Lottery undoubtedly did hit gambling, but most of the industries we deal with seem to have come through and are winning the battle."

The report says the number of lotteries organised by societies – the vast majority of them scratchcards – increased from 1,862 to 2,443, increasing ticket sales from £79m to £115m. However, lotteries organised by local authorities declined sharply from 47 to 18, with takings sinking to £260,000 from £600,000 in 1995-96.

Around 11 million people visited casinos, spending £2.6bn with American roulette by far the most popular game ahead of punto banco and blackjack. The report reveals that London has 21 casinos – more than any other capital city in the world.

Of the cash spent in casinos, 80 per cent was paid out in winnings to punters, leaving around £470m for operators.

ENVIRONMENT

Surfers at higher risk of hepatitis

Surfers are three times more likely to get the liver disease hepatitis A than the general public, a scientific survey has revealed.

The author of the report, Alistair Gammie, said: "There is significant correlation between the number of years surfed and the frequency of surfing and increased risk of acquiring the disease. We recommend that all surfers should be informed of the availability of a safe effective vaccine for hepatitis A which would offer them protection from the increased risk."

Chris Hines, general secretary of the pressure group Surfers Against Sewage, believes the results back his call for all coastal discharges of human waste to be properly treated by disinfection or microfiltration.

He said: "If water companies are aware of the risk and unaware of ways of minimising that risk, then it could be argued that they would be clearly negligent not to do so ... Hepatitis A has been shown to survive for up to 100 days in salt water, therefore the risk is not adequately dealt with by the pump and dump mentality of partially treated long sea outfalls. We don't want the risk dispersed or diluted we want it dealt with."



EDUCATION

Arts council in schools plea

Pupils should have compulsory lessons in the arts from the time they arrive in school at five to the minimum leaving age at 16, the Arts Council said yesterday.

Launching its new education and training policy, the council said it was wrong that mandatory study of subjects such as drama, music, dance and the visual arts should stop at 14, as at present.

Arts leaders want a review of the national curriculum, due in 2000, to place arts subjects firmly on the school timetable. Schools should be encouraged to have a formal arts policy and appoint a governor to have special responsibility for arts training, and teacher training should equip staff to teach the subject, the council says. In practice, schools are likely to subscribe to the spirit of the policy but may not be willing to put all its recommendations into practice. Teachers already feel the national curriculum is overcrowded, leaving them too little flexibility. **Lucy Ward**

MEDICINE

Mothers warned off antibiotics

Antibiotics are best avoided in children with ear ache because they do not bring quicker relief and contribute to the growth of resistant organisms, researchers say.

Three out of 10 children under the age of three get the ear infection known as otitis media and 97 per cent are given antibiotics. But a review of seven trials comparing antibiotic therapy with placebo, published in the *British Medical Journal*, found there was little evidence that those given antibiotics recovered more quickly, had fewer recurrences or a had a better long-term outcome. The researchers, from Boston University in the US, say the use of antibiotics in the condition results in the emergence of resistant organisms in the children and in the community. Ear ache is better treated with painkillers, especially where the diagnosis is uncertain, they say. **Jeremy Laurence**

JUSTICE

Why sex can be fatal for lesbians

Stereotyped media images of "killer dykes" and American Christian fundamentalism mean that 40 per cent of the women on death row in American prisons are lesbians or had an implication of lesbianism raised against them at their trial a Channel 4 documentary will allege on Monday.

This compares with estimates that the proportion of lesbians in the general population is no higher than 10 per cent.

The programme looked at the trials of the 46 women awaiting execution in the US and found that prosecutors used their sexual history – implying lesbianism, prostitution or promiscuity to secure the death penalty. The programme will argue that a mixture of Christian fundamentalism in parts of America and media images of lesbians influence the decisions of judges and juries. **Paul McCann**

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Q: Why don't priests have employment rights? A: Because they find their reward in Heaven

Kim Sengupta

Blessed are the servants of the Lord – but not apparently when it comes to the protection of employment laws, a sacked priest discovered at the Court of Appeal yesterday.

The Rev Alex Coker was told he could not have access to earthly powers to pursue a case alleging unfair and racially-motivated dismissal because his boss, God, was not of this world.

In a landmark ruling, Lords Justices Staughton, Ward and Mummery dismissed an appeal by the Anglican clergyman against an Employment Appeals Tribunal ruling barring him

from taking his case before an industrial tribunal.

Lord Justice Staughton said: "A minister of religion serves God and his congregation but does not have an employer. There is not a contract that he will serve a terrestrial employer in the performance of his duties".

Discussing the argument that a clergyman's employer was God, the judge added: "I don't think you have an address for him so you will not be able to serve any documents".

Dr Coker, who is black, was sacked from his £12,000-a-year post as curate at St Philip's Church in Crampton, south-west London, in May 1994,

losing a home and a car that came with the job. He says the Bishop of Croydon, who sacked him, had never given a reason for the dismissal.

The 48-year-old priest had been ordained by the Bishop of London in June 1986 and worked for the next four years as an unpaid minister in the parish of St Peter's, Belsize Park, north London.

With the agreement of the Bishop of Southwark, he took up his first paid appointment as curate to the vicar of St Luke's, Woodside, in November 1990. The job was terminated by the Bishop of Croydon in November 1993 and Dr Coker was then given a six-month appointment

as the curate of St Philip's, at the end of which he was sacked.

When Dr Coker initially took his case to an industrial tribunal claiming his dismissal was unfair and racially motivated, he was told the tribunal did possess the powers to adjudicate on the matter.

However, the Church of England holds that clergy work for God, not the church, and are office holders, not employees, and so have no protection under employment law. This view was upheld when it took the case to the Employment Appeals Tribunal last year.

Dr Coker had taken his action against the Bishop of Southwark at the Court of Appeal arguing that a letter from the Bishop offering him the post at St Luke's in 1990 was a contract of employment. Representing him, counsel Joseph Hage asked: "Why should Dr Coker, who has dedicated his life to serving the church, not be entitled to rely on the Employment Protection Act?"

"Is it right that Dr Coker should lose his home, income and career without even being given the possibility of making a complaint in the courts?"

Paul Goulding, for the Bishop, told the court that as a curate Dr Coker's working life was not conducted by contract but by conscience. He was a servant of God. If his manner of serving God was not acceptable to the church then his pastorate could be ended by the church.

Mr Goulding added that a curate's working life was carried out in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. God, not the Bishop was his employer.

The original one-day hearing was a fortnight ago, when judgement was reserved. Yesterday the Court of Appeal judges ruled that Dr Coker was not employed under a contract, and his appeal was dismissed.

Proms last night is ours, says the BBC

David Lister
Arts News Editor

From wars have broken out between the BBC and classical music promoters using the title Last Night Of The Proms.

The BBC claims the world famous phrase for the end of their season of promenade concerts belongs to the corporation. And one leading classical music promoter has been warned by BBC lawyers that he cannot use the words for one of his concerts.

The word "proms" is used by a number of orchestras in the UK. Only last week the Halle Orchestra in Manchester staged its own Last Night Of The Proms. At least seven other Last Night Of The Proms concerts are being staged by orchestras this summer.



The 'real' Proms: does using their name make other concerts better?

But now the BBC is saying it should have sole use of the title for classical music concerts.

However, the promoter Raymond Gubbay, who is presenting two Last Nights of the Proms to round off his lakeside concert seasons at Crystal Palace in London (ironically, with the BBC Concert Orchestra) and at Penrhyn Place in Kent, yesterday fired off an indignant letter to the BBC legal department saying he had no intention of changing his mind.

In a letter to BBC lawyer Tristram Kennedy Harper, Mr Gubbay says: "I refer to... your use of the phrase 'ripping off the BBC' in relation to our use of programme titles and material for one of our open-air summer concerts..."

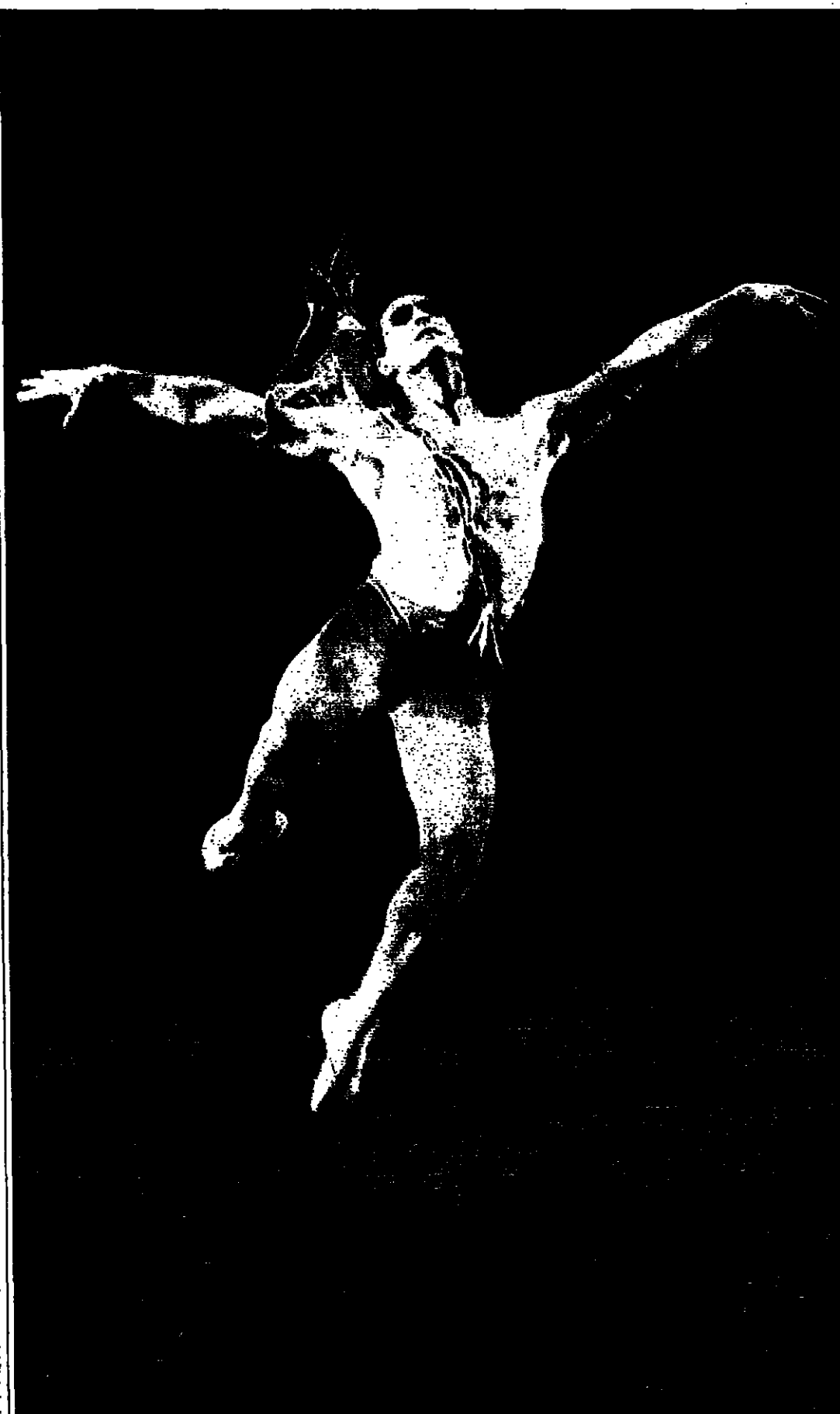
"I find it entirely unacceptable that an employee of the BBC should wish to comment on our activities with such an ill-judged and insulting comment. We promote over 200 performances per year of concerts, opera and ballet, involving dozens of orchestras and hundreds of artists of all kinds, without any recourse to public subsidy or money from licence-payers. To try to paint us as you did as some kind of cowboy outfit is as inaccurate as it is insulting."

The BBC responded with a statement from its Intellectual Property Department saying: "The BBC's legal department did write to Raymond Gubbay objecting to the promotion of a concert at Fenshurst Place under the title Last Night Of The Proms. The BBC has recently been concerned that various concert organisers have been using the term 'Proms' to promote their concerts in such a way that might suggest a connection with the BBC Proms – in one case using photographs of a BBC Last Night Of The Proms in their publicity material."

"The BBC has been broadcasting and has been solely responsible for the organisation of the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, now simply known as The Proms, since 1927. The Proms are perhaps the most famous concert festival in the world and generate an incalculable reputation and goodwill for the BBC. A considerable portion of the BBC's income from licence-payers goes towards the annual Proms festival. The BBC takes steps to protect its rights in its trade marks and programme titles and it would be surprising if it did not also seek to protect its reputation in The Proms."

"While the term 'prom' can of course be used descriptively, the BBC does think it reasonable to object when it believes that a connection with the BBC is being suggested and that the public might be misled."

Mr Gubbay said last night: "I utterly refuse to recognise any BBC ownership of the word proms or the title Last Night Of The Proms. Promenade concerts are staged by promoters all over the country. Are they seriously telling me that people sitting in the middle of a field in Kent might get confused into thinking they are in the Royal Albert Hall? I now fully intend to run a whole concert series entitled Last Night Of The Proms this winter."



New stager: Irek Mukhamedov performing the pas de deux from The Talisman Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Curtains as Covent Garden goes into exile

David Lister
Arts News Editor

The Royal Ballet last night gave its final performance at Covent Garden, central London, before the two-year closure for its controversial £213m redevelopment.

Irek Mukhamedov, Darcey Bussell, Sylvie Guillem and all the company's leading dancers were taking part in a mixed programme featuring Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, William Forsythe's *Septet*, Pyotr Gusev's version of *The Talisman pas de deux* and George Balanchine's *Symphony in C*.

On Monday, artists from both the Royal Ballet and Royal Opera will participate in the very last extravaganza before closure: the Farewell Gala, featuring Plácido Domingo, Bryn Terfel, Sylvie Guillem and Darcey Bussell, which will be screened live on BBC2.

The Royal Opera House will be closed for two years for the renovation, being done with the help of a £78m National Lottery grant. The Royal Opera and Royal Ballet will now go "on the road".

The Royal Ballet is going to the Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank, and to the Labatt's Apollo, Hammersmith, while the Royal Opera is set to perform at the Barbican in the City of London, the Shafsbury Theatre, the Royal Albert Hall, the Royal Festival Hall and at the Edinburgh Festival.

The last weeks of the two companies at the Royal Opera House have been tarnished by controversy surrounding the departure of the chief executive, Genista McIntosh, and her replacement with the Arts Council secretary-general, Mary Allen.

A dance teacher yesterday won her claim for unfair dismissal against the Royal Ballet School – but she will not get her job back. Linda Goss had alleged that she was fired because in 1996 because she repeatedly alleged that children were a bullied and mocked by staff.

But an industrial tribunal in Croydon, while agreeing she was unfairly dismissed, said it was because the school needed to make changes in staff, not through victimisation.

IN TOMORROW'S
INDEPENDENT

Five sections for the very best in news, features, sport, business, travel, property and money



THE BEST IN SUMMER READING

A special edition of the *Sunday Review* featuring new stories and poems from today's brightest literary stars – including John Updike (above), Jeanette Winterson, Blake Morrison, Candia McWilliam and Alain de Botton

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

Unsuspected pregnancies: how, why, are you... are you sure?



WHAT'S THE STORY? Oasis in all their glory

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN How to survive without your mobile phone

BOOKS FOR THE BEACH ...

... and beyond. Our pick of the best titles of 1997

THE FEAR IS OUT THERE

What if we are really not alone?

SECRETS OF FRANCE

New routes to explore – by boat, boat, and bicycle

THE SUNDAY PREVIEW

Full seven-day terrestrial and satellite TV listings

IT IS... ARE YOU?

Freemasons reveal themselves in own magazine

Michael Streeter

The journey to the modern world has been a gradual one for Freemasonry, its path punctuated by significant events: an inquiry by backbench MPs, a recent waspish television documentary, and satirisation on *Coronation Street*.

Now the followers of the Great Architect have been given that crucial element of any late 20th century pursuit – the publication of its own magazine. Coming soon to a newsagent near you is *Freemasonry Today*, a glossy mag, price £2.50, written for "everyone with an interest in Freemasonry".

Although its first quarterly edition is available only on subscription, attracting a healthy 27,000 so far, the company hopes it will soon take its place alongside the array of fishing, sporting and lifestyle titles on newsagent shelves. Whether it can attract the casual browser over the rival appeal of *Louder, Righty World*, or *Company*, is doubted by some critics.

The list of contents underlines the largely serious tone of the journal, with headlines such as *Why Ritual Excellence?*, *In those days the Masters carried Swords*, and *Making History: Elias Ashmole & the Origins of Speculative Freemasonry*. The ad-

verts are also revealing, offering a chance to buy the best quality regalia for members, or the opportunity – for just £24.99 – to obtain a video of the "ultimate tour". That is, footage of Freemasons' Hall in London.

However, the magazine also contains a few surprises, including a piece written by a pop music composer eulogising fellow-mason Mozart (whose *The Magic Flute* was in one sense a publicity puff for Freemasonry) and a review of a new CD collection from the late Jimi Hendrix.

The editor, Tobias Churton, himself a freemason, believes general readers will be attracted as well as the estimated 350,000 members in

England and Wales. "The aim is to spread the knowledge of the masonry to masons and the general public. Its history, theory, philosophy and presence throughout the world."

He added: "There has been a dearth of such information which has meant that masons have had to rely on exaggerated and mythologised accounts."

Although the founders of the publication are all masons and any profits will go to charity, there are non-masons involved in the production. Mr Churton is using designers Remoté Stone, a group of young people more associated with CD covers

and rave ticket designs. "They are young and open-minded and I really wanted them to be involved with the magazine," he said.

Although described as "independent", *Freemasonry Today* is fully backed by the United Grand Lodge of England. Its spokesman, John Hamill, said it had long been looking for such a publication, in an effort to move away from the secrecy that surrounded the organisation in the 1950s and 1960s.

He said: "There is a tradition of masonic journalism and there used to be a monthly illustrated magazine. The tradition was interrupted by the Second World War."



On the square: The new magazine

CLEVER CARS FROM JAPAN

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Price correct at time of going to press and includes number plates, delivery and 12 months' road fund licence. Car featured Grand Moveo at £13,500 on the road.

هكذا من الأصل

news

Mandela finds freedom in Oxford

Ian Burrell

The South African President, Nelson Mandela, was greeted by thousands of cheering admirers in Oxford yesterday when he arrived to receive the Freedom of the City.

Accompanied by his partner, Graca Machel, Mr Mandela, 78, received a rapturous reception from a crowd of about 2,000 when he arrived at Oxford Town Hall. He said: "Naturally, we have looked forward to this day very eagerly because of the significance of Oxford, not only for the British people, but in the world. It is a centre of excellence and we are happy to be associated with it."

Thanking the university Chancellor, Dr Peter North, for his welcome, Mr Mandela said South Africa was

indebted to the city and its colleges for their "generous and practical solidarity" in the fight against apartheid. He said many exiled South African freedom campaigners had found the doors of universities such as Oxford open to them, allowing them educational opportunities not possible in their homeland.

"Democratic South Africa has drawn great benefit from its relationship with Oxford and we are only at the beginning of our association," he said.

After the ceremony, Mr Mandela and Mrs Machel emerged from the town hall and delighted the waiting crowds with a walkabout, shaking hands with dozens of well-wishers before being driven off in his limousine to speak at the Bodleian Library.



Walkabout: Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel meeting wellwishers in Oxford yesterday

Photograph: Max Nash

BA chief's overture as more air chaos looms

Barrie Clement and Randeep Ramesh

A whiff of compromise in the British Airways cabin-crew dispute was in the air yesterday as the industrial action caused a third day of severe disruption. The airline managed to get 76 flights aloft yesterday, less than 35 per cent of the scheduled timetable from Heathrow, Gatwick and 12 services - because cabin crew staff there belong to "EuroGatwick", formerly Dan Air, which pays staff even less than the proposed BA deal.

The walk-out by cabin crew forced British Airways to cancel hundreds of flights and left tens of thousands of people stranded. Things do not look much better this weekend for Heathrow. Because many planes are out of "position", BA say only 90 short-haul services and 75 per cent of long-haul flights will operate.

Management also hoped for fresh talks yesterday to avert separate strikes by 9,000 ground staff after the rejection of a new management offer. Further action by cabin crew coupled with ground staff could ground BA's fleet. Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, called on the Transport and General Workers Union to put forward their proposals to settle the dispute involving stewards and stewardesses, who came to the end of a three-day walk-out at 6am this morning.

In a letter to Bill Morris, TGWU general secretary, Mr Ayling asked to see the union's plans to save £42m in cabin crew costs, the issue at the centre of the conflict, which has led to the threat of a series of three-day stoppages. If the suggestions are "realistic", Mr Ayling said he would be happy to meet the TGWU and break away union Cabin Crew 89 to work out a deal. It would have to be "acceptable to all parties" and "better" than the deal already signed by the minority union and imposed on all employees.

George Ryde, national official for Civil Aviation for the transport union, hoped management would rescind a threat to suspend strikers arriving

back at work today if they refused to work normally. Talks would only be possible if his members were not "victims".

But BA executives told reporters yesterday that crew would have to sign a "non-disruption" pledge. The company said it will also question the 1,900 staff who called in sick. Those unable to produce a doctor's note will have to "explain themselves".

Despite strained relations, Mr Ryde welcomed the management gesture and said his union would look again at its existing suggestions, which management calculated would only save £26m.

A decision on more stop-



Bill Morris: Received letter from Bob Ayling

pages of cabin crew is scheduled for Monday, when representatives of ground staff will also decide whether to set dates for the start of their own campaign. There were indications yesterday, however, that management would be prepared to improve the offer to catering staff. The company plans to sell the catering division, and the transport union opposes this. The airline has offered employees substantial guarantees about future conditions.

The new moves towards a peace formula emerged yesterday after Mr Morris said the end of cabin crews' three-day strike would enable both sides to "pursue for peace". Mr Ayling sent him a letter arguing that while the imposed deal represented the best way through, he would be prepared to look at further TGWU suggestions.

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Official: those golden oldies were the best

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The baby-boomers refrain that pop music has gone down hill since the Sixties has been confirmed by a poll of pop experts that seems to show the art of the single peaked in 1966.

The Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" heads a list of the top 100 singles of all time as picked by more than 100 singers, songwriters, musicians and producers for this month's *Mojo* magazine.

Only one single released in the Nineties - "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana - makes it on the list. The rest is dominated by acts from the Sixties like The Beatles, the Rolling Stones and the Beach Boys.

The Eighties does no better on the list than the Nineties, with "Just When Doves Cry" by Prince making the list. The Seventies do better thanks to a number of entries by David Bowie, but there is only "God Save The Queen" by the Sex Pistols to represent the entire punk and post-punk era. No dance music single from the last 10 years made the list.

But the magazine insists the music industry people questioned were not all ageing hippies and rock dinosaurs.

In fact those voting included Ian Broudie, lead singer of The Lightning Seeds, Noel Gallagher of Oasis and even former Take That star Gary Barlow.

"It wasn't just a bunch of old farts we questioned," said

Mojo's features editor Paul Trynka. "It was a cross-section, although everyone who voted had to have a good number of hits themselves."

"The Sixties singles did well because there's more unanimity about hits from the Sixties. Musical genres now have splintered and people named all sorts of different bands from the Nineties."

Mr Trynka believes Nirvana did well because that one song invented the "grunge" movement and had a huge influence across all sorts of styles of music.

But he thinks the art of the pop single could be little improved on after the Beach Boys. "Like any art form the principles are established fairly soon. By 1968 they had done everything that could be done with a single. Even if you look at experimental techniques used by musicians like The Chemical Brothers its hard to say they're coming up with anything more complex than 'Good Vibrations'."

Paul McCartney, one of those surveyed, told *Mojo* that "Good Vibrations" and the group's album *Pet Sounds* were phenomenal. "It really was a big turn on for me. I can still listen to it and go 'sheeit, how did he ever think of that?'"

And proving the breadth of the single's appeal, John Squire of Nineties indie band The Seahorses, described it as "Spine tinglingly inspired. A complete masterpiece."

"Good Vibrations" and *Pet Sounds* were largely the inspiration of Brian Wilson, who used the special effects stand-by from sci-fi movies, the Theremin, on the track to give the "vibration" sound. He was also one of the first musicians to use an eight-track recording equipment to mix multiple layers of sound and create what he described himself as a "pocket symphony".



Class of '67: The original Radio 1 line-up, below, and the mature regrouping yesterday: back row, left to right, Tony Blackburn, Jimmy Young, Duncan Johnson, Dave Cash, Robin Scott; middle row, Bob Holness, Terry Wogan, Keith Skues, Chris Denning, Pete Myers, and Pete Brady (bearded) above; front row, Pete Murray, Ed Stewart, Pete Drummond, Mike Ahern

Main photograph: David Rose

First timers now the old timers

Clare Garner

"We're the no hair people," joked Pete Myers, 58, introducing the cast of original BBC Radio 1 disc jockeys assembled on the steps of All Souls Church outside Broadcasting House.

A bit of thinning on top was to be expected. It was, after all, 30 years since they had struck the same pose for the launch of Radio 1. Now they were recreating the scene for BBC2's "rockumentary": *The Radio One Story*, to be screened later this year.

"Only someone with a diseased imagination could have thought it possible," said John Peel, 58, the only surviving record spinner at Radio 1. He sat beside Mike Ahern, 54, who holds the record for the shortest tenancy of any Radio 1 slot. The pair were asked to present a programme called *Top Gear*, but after one hour it became clear that Mr Ahern was not the man for the job. "He was fantastic. I was awful," he explained. "He's right," Peel agreed. Some were clearly feeling their age.



Terry Wogan, 59, remarked: "It'll probably take me 10 minutes to get out of this position. I'm surprised we don't all need wheelchairs." Others, such as Pete Murray, were taking the prospect of retirement in their stride. "I've always been retired," said Mr Murray, 72, who hosts

an LBC phone-in between playing golf four times a week and tennis twice. "I've never over exerted myself, put it that way, so it won't be much different."

Robin Scott, 77, who was in charge of launching Radio 1 and Radio 2, surveyed the scene. He wore his 30-year-old

cardboard "I'm a Radio 1 one upman" badge and clutched faded cuttings of his finest hour as he considered how a certain carrot-haired character would have gone down then. Chris (Evans) would have been way ahead of the time," he began tactfully. "That style of having the gang in the background and the hurly burly atmosphere is not one I would have gone for. ... It was all in-jokes. You couldn't hear half what he was saying."

Tony Blackburn, 54, first to go on air in 1967, with the words: "Welcome to the exciting sound of Radio 1" before putting the first record on the turntable: "Flowers In The Rain" by The Move. "I was last to pitch up at the photo call. 'Is this it?' he said, rushing onto the steps."

Perhaps he was referring to some notable absences from the class of '67, not least the much-missed Kenny Everett, who died of Aids in 1995, and the late Mike Raven and Barry Aldiss. Johnny Moran, Mike Lennox, Dave Rider and David Symonds were unable to attend the picture recreation yesterday.

Arts Notebook, Long Weekend, page 4

The Mojo top 50	
1 Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys (1966)	24 Summertime Blues - Eddie Cochran (1958)
2 Strawberry Fields Forever/Penny Lane - The Beatles (1967)	25 That'll Be The Day - Buddy Holly (1957)
3 Like A Rolling Stone - Bob Dylan (1965)	26 Just When Doves Cry - Prince, 1984
4 Be My Baby - The Ronettes (1963)	27 The Beatles' Dark Side - The Rolling Stones (1968)
5 I Heard It Through The Grapevine - Marvin Gaye (1968)	28 Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys (1966)
6 I Can't Get No Satisfaction - The Rolling Stones (1965)	29 Smells Like Teen Spirit - Nirvana (1992)
7 Hey Jude/Revolution - The Beatles (1968)	30 You Really Got Me - The Sex Pistols (1976)
8 River Deep, Mountain High - Joe & Tina Turner (1965)	31 A Change In The Weather - Sam Cooke (1964)
9 Smells Like Teen Spirit - Nirvana (1992)	32 Reach Out To The Others - The Four Tops
10 Where's The Party - Marvin Gaye (1977)	33 I Can't Stand The Heat - Ann Peebles (1973)
11 Don't Worry Baby - The Beach Boys (1964)	34 Heroes - David Bowie (1977)
12 Hey Joe - The Jimi Hendrix Experience (1966)	35 Papa's Got A Brand New Bag - James Brown (1969)
13 You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling - The Righteous Brothers (1964)	36 Imagine - John Lennon (1970)
14 I Want To Hold Your Hand - The Beatles (1963)	37 Supersonic - Shy (1968)
15 Respect - Aretha Franklin (1967)	38 Runaway - Del Shannon (1958)
16 Heartbreak Hotel - Elvis Presley (1956)	39 Space Oddity - David Bowie (1969)
17 Giddy Up! The Doo! The Doo! - The Bay City Rollers (1967)	40 Schism - Phish (1993)
18 Born To Run - Bruce Springsteen (1975)	41 Green Onions - Booker T & The MGs (1962)
19 The Beatles' White Album - The Beatles (1968)	42 Why Do Fools Fall In Love - Frankie Lymon And The Teenagers (1956)
20 God Save The Queen - Sex Pistols (1977)	43 Purple Haze - The Jimi Hendrix Experience (1967)
21 Family Affair - Sly And The Family Stone (1972)	44 Let's Stay Together - Al Green (1971)
22 A Whiter Shade Of Pale - Procol Harum (1967)	45 Stayin' Alive - The Bee Gees (1976)
23 Dancing In The Street - Martha & The Vandellas (1964)	46 Stayin' Alive - The Bee Gees (1976)
	47 Stay With Me - Lorraine Ellison (1966)
	48 I Want You Back - The Jackson 5 (1969)
	49 Wichita Lineman - Glen Campbell (1969)
	50 Honky Tonk - Bill Doggett (1958)

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MS patient wins right to costly treatment

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

A patient suffering from multiple sclerosis won a court battle to obtain an expensive new drug yesterday after a judge criticised his health authority for "unacceptable and inconsistent" excuses for not supplying the treatment.

Kenneth Fisher, 33, who was diagnosed with MS in 1987, was assessed as suitable for treatment with beta-interferon, used to extend periods of remission from the disease, in January 1996. He never received the drug, which costs £10,000 a year, because North Derbyshire health authority operated what was in effect a blanket ban despite explicit instructions from ministers that the drug should be made available on the basis of clinical need.

Mr Justice Dyson accused the authority of using "creative constraints" and being "disingenuous" in its attempts to avoid implementing national policy and hold the line on an "unsustainable" position.

The judge said Mr Fisher's condition had since deteriorated and there was now a question of whether he would still benefit from the drug. Giving the health authority 14 days to reconsider its decision not to fund his treatment, he said: "This is a matter on the conscience of the individuals in question."

Outside court, Mr Fisher's parents said they would take legal advice with a view to suing the health authority. His mother, Margaret, 60, said: "I am just upset that it has taken so long. It has been heartbreaking."

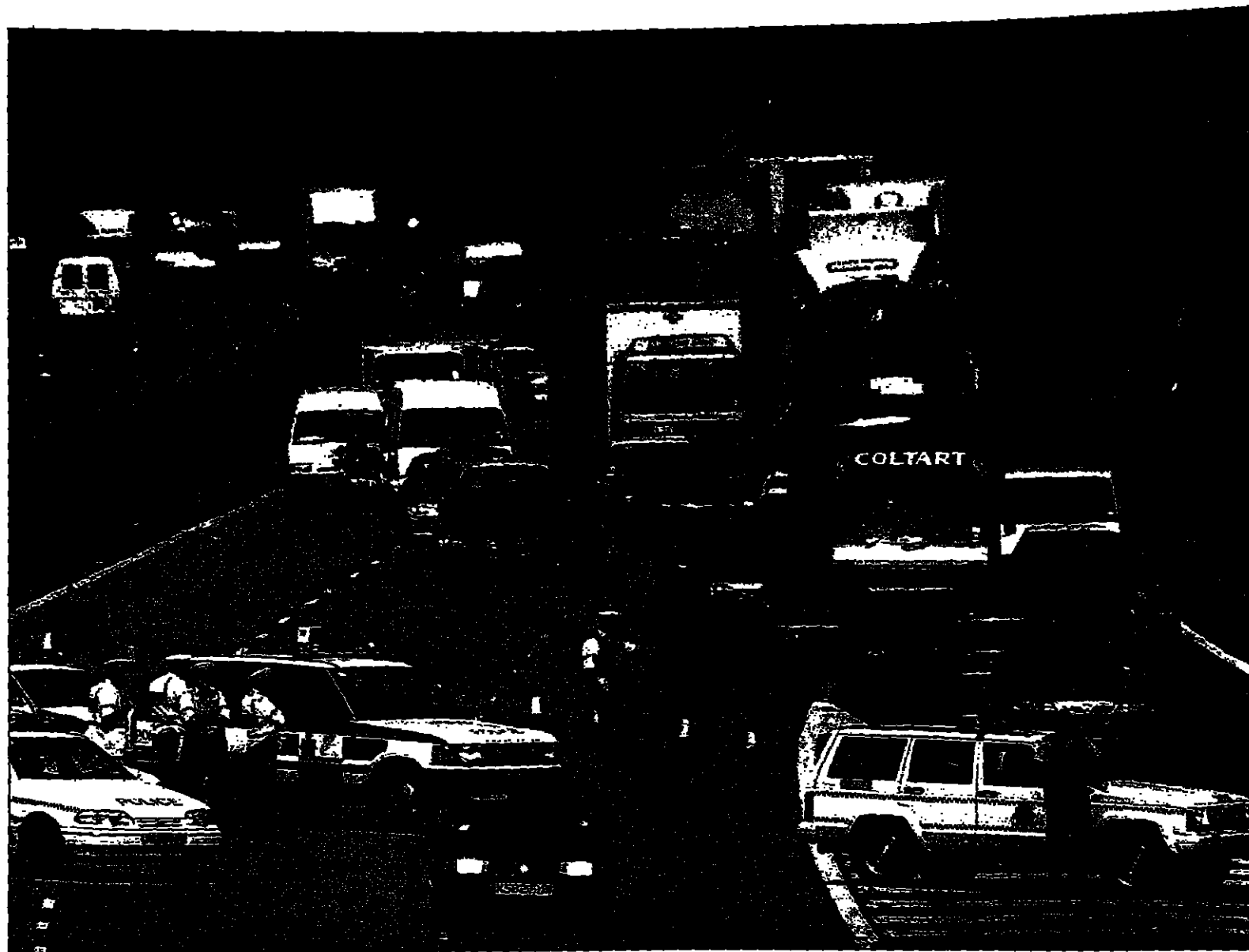
Peter Cardy, chief executive

of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, said it was an "extraordinary judgment delivered in extraordinary terms" which attacked the authority for repeatedly finding new reasons not to prescribe the drug. Most health authorities in England followed the national guidelines but some, such as Cambridge, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, did not. "I am sure they will want to look at their policies again," he said. Health authorities in Northern Ireland followed the guidelines but most in Scotland did not, he added.

Beta-interferon was licensed in 1995. Normally health authorities are left to decide whether to fund expensive new treatments but, because of the interest in beta-interferon, the NHS Executive exceptionally issued guidelines saying it should be made available to those capable of benefiting from it as judged by consultant neurologists. The drug is only suitable for the 40 per cent of MS sufferers with the relapsing/remitting form of the disease, of whom about 10 per cent are thought likely to benefit.

North Derbyshire health authority yesterday denied it had operated a blanket ban on the drug but admitted it had not set aside a specific sum to pay for it. "We did not feel able to give it additional priority because of the limited evidence of its effectiveness available at the time," a spokeswoman said.

The British Medical Association said arbitrary rationing of treatments based on where patients happened to live was unacceptable and called on the Government to take the lead in creating a national framework.



Hold-up: Traffic jams building up at the turnoff to Harlow in Essex on the M11 after the police raid on four cars yesterday. Armed officers from Norfolk and the Metropolitan Police moved in after a lengthy joint investigation

Cops and robbers chase shuts the M11

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Four men were arrested and four handguns seized by armed police in an operation yesterday that brought a motorway to standstill for several hours. The police believed they had thwarted an armed robbery planned for Norwich.

The raid on four cars on the M11 took place yesterday morning near Harlow in Essex after a lengthy investigation by the Metropolitan Police's Flying Squad and Norfolk Constabulary.

The police said that no shots were fired and no one was injured in the incident which closed the southbound carriageway of the M11 over a four-mile stretch between its junction with the M25 and the Harlow turn-off.

A spokeswoman from the Metropolitan Police said: "We believe we have thwarted a major armed robbery planned for Norwich." The arrested men, who were being held in custody, were believed to have come from north London.

Tracie 'wanted marriage not murder'

Michael Streeter

Tracie Andrews, accused of hacking her fiancé to death after a row, wanted marriage, not murder, a court was told yesterday. Ronald Thwaites QC, for the defence, also told Birmingham Crown Court, that Ms Andrews, 28, had been unfairly vilified by the media.

"Tracie Andrews did not have a motive for murder - she had a motive for marriage. This is the man she had fixed upon and he upon her to spend the rest of her life with. They had found glamour with each other, charm with each other; they wanted each other."

Mr Thwaites said Lee Harvey had worn his engagement ring the night he was killed, and Ms Andrews was still wearing it now as she sat in the dock on trial for his murder, which she denies. The court was told it would be extraordinary for a young woman to spend an evening in the pub with her lover and for it to end in such a "horrendous bloodbath in the road".

Mr Thwaites, presenting the case for the defence, said his client had been effectively "written off" after vindictive newspaper reports of her arrest and trial for the alleged roadside murder of Mr Harvey. He said cover-

age of the case and representations of Ms Andrews in the media were among the worst examples of "lynch-mob journalism" he had seen. Mr Thwaites said Ms Andrews had been "vilified in the press" and labelled a wicked person, effectively convicting her before a word of her defence had been heard. "She doesn't claim celebrity for herself; she doesn't seek it. She is a young woman, a single mother, in common with thousands of others."

Ms Andrews, of the Becks, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, denies murdering Mr Harvey, who lived with her, on 1 December.

She says Mr Harvey was stabbed by a passenger in a blue Ford Sierra, and that she was punched in the face, after a road-rage incident at Coopers Hill, Alvechurch.

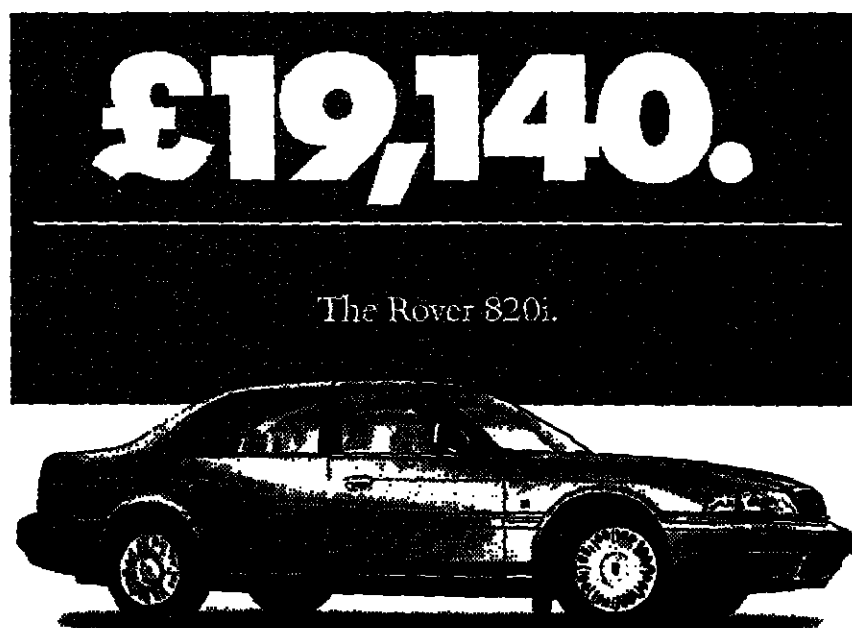
Mr Thwaites said the prosecution had put forward a case which was "painful in its simplicity", that on the night of the murder a fierce and violent argument had started in the couple's car and had ended with Miss Andrews stabbing her fiancé more than 30 times until her anger had subsided.

He added: "... the prosecution say that this defendant, Miss Tracie Andrews, had a motive for murder. She

says no - she had a motive for marriage." The senior police officer investigating the death of Harvey admitted that a witness said she heard a car racing away from the murder scene at around the time he was stabbed, a court heard yesterday.

But Detective Superintendent Ian Johnston said other witnesses contradicted the woman's account that she heard the high-pitched screeching of a car some time after 10.40pm on the night Mr Harvey was allegedly stabbed to death by Ms Andrews, a former model.

The case continues.



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Students forced to live off their parents

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Parents are paying out £403m a year to help their children through university, according to a survey released today. The money, averaging £631 a year among those students who receive extra cash, is on top of the parental contribution to the grant made by better-off parents.

News of the increasing parental subsidy to students comes as Sir Ron Dearing's committee is preparing to recommend that free tuition should end, putting even more pressure on parents to fund their children through higher education.

At present, students and their parents contribute only to living costs through a mixture of grants and loans. More than a third of students – 37 per cent – now cite parents as their main source of income, compared with only a quarter four years ago.

A growing number of students are accepting money from their families as a gift rather than a loan as anxious parents try to ensure their offspring do not leave university burdened with debt; the number owing money to their parents has halved in the last four years.

The annual Barclays Student Survey involved interviews with 1,921 students in 16 English and Welsh universities and was carried out by CEL, an independent research company. Parents appear to support their daughters through college more than their sons.

Forty-two per cent of women students cited their parents as their main source of income, compared with only 32 per cent of men. Students are increasingly accepting debt as a way of life and fewer of them are worried or angry about it than in the past.



The percentage of students concerned about debt has fallen by 21 per cent over the last five years.

Most students expect to be in debt at the end of their course – 86 per cent compared with 80 per cent last

year. The overall average debt is £2,475 at the end of a course; 25 per cent on last year's figure but a low or increase than in the previous year, perhaps because parents are contributing more.

Students' dependence on government loans has increased as the value of the grant has decreased. This year, nearly two in 10 said it was their main source of income compared with only one in 10 last year.

Despite increasing debts, the proportion of students who work during term time has remained at just under a third. Four in five students work in the summer holidays and more than half are now saving up

earnings from part-time jobs before going on to university.

Gordon Rankin, director of personal banking at Barclays, said: "The nature of student funding has changed dramatically in the six years

Work and play: Rina Patel (left), a student at Nottingham Trent University, supports herself with a part-time job, while Cambridge student Duncan Parrish receives £300 a month from his parents. Photographs: Adrian Dennis/Bournemouth news

that we have been conducting the survey.

"Students are becoming more ingenious and sophisticated at raising money."

Douglas Trainer, president of the National Union of Students, said: "Many students are only able to survive because of extra assistance from parents, but this can't be the case for all students, especially those from low-income families."

"New suggestions that students should also bear the costs for their tuition are completely crushed by the survey which shows the extent to which students and parents pay out now."

The survey shows that, of students who receive additional voluntary contributions from parents, maths and science students receive the most. Social science students had the highest levels of debt at the time of the survey and maths and science students the lowest.

Fieldwork for the study was completed in May this year. The most popular reason for choosing a course was a liking for the subject. However, students are increasingly taking courses that will help them in the job market.

Students on vocational and applied courses have the highest salary expectations – £14,348 – although in reality they are likely to be paid five per cent less than this.

The hard worker: earning success

Rina Patel, Nottingham Trent:

Rina Patel has just finished the third year of a four-year course in Interior Architecture and Design at Nottingham Trent University. Rina, 22, is also regularly working weekends at a mother and children's wear store. "They operate a nil-hour contract; you're not contracted for any number of hours. They simply ring up and ask if you can work specific times. I mostly work Sundays, but in busy periods, like the run-up to Christmas, I've done whole weekends. If I need extra money, I sometimes work evenings too."

The store pays £3.85 an hour, though this doubles on Sundays. Rina usually works for four or five hours at a stretch. "Mostly it doesn't affect university work because it's only weekends. If I have a big project I do fewer hours."

Rina is on a full grant, which covers the rent – about £45 a week, but not much more. Her parents send her a little money, but it is only the job that gives her enough to live on. Her main extra expenditure is on course projects which cost between £15 and £20 a week. "The materials and pens cost quite a bit. But, basically, the more money you throw at the projects, the better the marks for your models." She allocates her earned money to these. "If I didn't have my work money to spend, then the other money in my account would just end up going on the projects," she says. Rina believes if this were the case, she wouldn't have enough money to live on.

Many of her friends work to support themselves, often in local pubs or bars. However, she prefers her job because she gets to hang around with these great married women and chat to them about food, small children and chicken pox. However, Rina says she has done her best not to let her college friends visit her at work. "My uniform is so awful. I have to wear dungarees, a yellow striped shirt and a bright red bow-tie."

Tom Hampson

The easy life: subsidised by family

Duncan Parrish, Cambridge:

Duncan Parrish is one of the lucky ones. He's at Clare College, Cambridge, at the end of his second year reading biology. Apart from during his gap year, he's never had any full- or part-time work. His parents give him "a monthly allowance, £300, which isn't huge, but is perfectly adequate."

His case is unusual. His father is a naval attaché in Moscow, and so his parents live abroad. He and his brother live at home in Surrey through the vacations. During term time, he lives in hall. One of the advantages of Cambridge is that "the rent's ridiculously low; only about £265 a term", while terms are usually 10 weeks long.

Students at Cambridge aren't allowed to work during term time, but Duncan is not planning to work over the summer either. He has taken out a full student loan of £1,500 and this is largely to help him out while he writes. "I'm spending the summer writing a play. I've shown some of my stuff to publishers who are interested. Most of my friends don't work over the Easter or Christmas holidays, but do have jobs over the summer."

Yesterday, he was at a conference of young Labour student representatives in Bournemouth. "Obviously I've got some friends who have never done a day's work in their lives," he says. "I could give you loads of names, but perhaps that's just Oxbridge."

A Cambridge Union spokesman said that Duncan's situation was "very unusual" and that most students at Cambridge were struggling.

However, Duncan does not feel too obligated to his parents. "I've always been reasonably independent. If I had to start with nothing tomorrow, I know I could go out and get a job. My parents are supporting me at the moment. I don't have any problems with that. I'll do the same for my kids and I'm glad I'm not sponging off the state."

Tom Hampson

Teachers seek more time for 'magic moments'

Lacy Ward
Education Correspondent

Teachers want more time on the timetable for "magic moments" with pupils to put the fun back into learning.

The National Union of Teachers yesterday called for an immediate review of the primary school curriculum to make room for "spontaneous activities."

Relaxing requirements to teach subjects such as geography and history could also be used for the three Rs and for lessons in moral development and citizenship, according to teachers interviewed in a study carried out for the NUT by Leicester University.

One teacher said: "We never have time to listen when children come in with 'I did this' or 'Here's my book' or 'I found this twig on the way to school'."

"It is very hard to make them know that these things are important to us as well."

The Government's literacy and numeracy targets for 2002 would be threatened unless schools had more flexibility in planning the timetable, the NUT said.

The university's study found that, on average, primary schools were already exceeding the hour a day ministers say should be spent on literacy and using the hour recommended for numeracy.

More flexibility in the national curriculum would allow schools to spend longer on the basics while more moral and social education would encourage discipline.

Teachers also felt that children were missing out on some of the fun of learning because of the rigidity of the curriculum. They wanted more time for

sessions such as "circle time", in which children sit round and are encouraged to talk to each other about, perhaps, a cuddly toy being passed round.

A so-called "discretionary day" each week, supposedly freed up by Sir Ron Dearing in the first slimming of the curriculum in 1994, had been largely swallowed up in covering the curriculum and providing more time for literacy and numeracy, headteachers said.

NUT general secretary Doug McAvoy said: "The report identifies the denial of opportunity for teachers to build on the spontaneous interests of their pupils and highlights the stifling effects of the curriculum."

A Department for Education and Employment spokesman said ministers had heeded teachers' calls for stability and had promised not to change the curriculum before 2000.

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news

Delay over 'right to know' Bill provokes anger

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Plans for a White Paper on freedom of information have been delayed amid wrangling about its content, it emerged yesterday. But while campaigners claimed that civil servants were trying to water down the measure, government sources maintained that there were simply a few problems in defining who should be covered by it.

There was further protest yesterday after it emerged that ministers were planning to make their legislation enforceable through a parliamentary committee rather than through the courts or an information commissioner.

The Government had promised to deliver its White Paper before MPs left for their long summer holidays at the end of this month. However, it now seems that it is unlikely to be published before October.

Yesterday, Andrew Puddhephatt, director of the constitutional reform group Charter 88, said he understood that the measure had been delayed because civil servants wanted to include a catch-all exemption which would allow them to withhold information. The clause would mirror one on "good government" in the existing Open Government Code of Practice, which exempts information "whose disclosure would harm the proper and efficient conduct of the operations of a department or other public body".

Mr Puddhephatt said the delay was being caused by "substantial civil service opposition". "Three out of four people in this country back freedom of information, and there is clear gov-

ernment support for this. Sir Humphrey is alive and well," he said, referring to the archetypal civil servant in the BBC's *Yes, Minister* series.

Donald Dewar, speaking at a Charter 88 convention on the constitution in London, denied the charges and said the Government was determined to press ahead with the measure.

"I suspect if Sir Humphrey exists he has probably retired into a rest home for the bewildered, given the pressure of change. We obviously want to get the measure right but the commitment is there and it is strong," he said.

The Cabinet Office said there were complications in defining some of the organisations where the open-government rules would apply, and other government sources said the most important thing was getting the measure right.

In a separate development yesterday, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, David Clark, said he expected the legislation, due next year, to be enforced through a parliamentary committee rather than through the courts or an information commissioner. The parliamentary ombudsman and his select committee could be made responsible, he said in an interview with *Stakeholder* magazine.

Maurice Frankel, director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information, said such a move would be totally unacceptable. "At the end of the day a legally enforceable right is in our view essential. We would be deeply concerned if the applicant was ultimately denied such a right," he wrote in a letter of protest to Dr Clark.



Cemetery capers: The mystique of the graveyard will be lifted at the City of London burial ground open day to be held tomorrow

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Open house among the tombstones shows that cemeteries are not always so grave

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

Thousands of east Londoners will give Southend and the Lakeside shopping centre a miss tomorrow in favour of an outing among the headstones and Gothic funeral architecture of the City of London Cemetery in Wanstead Flats.

Grave diggers will demonstrate their craft, parties will be shown into the crematorium furnace and, weather permitting, families will picnic on the lawns of one of the capital's most tranquil and well-tended green spaces.

The English attitude to death as a taboo subject makes an open day at a

cemetery sound macabre. But at the City of London they see it as an educational mission, an opportunity to dispel some of the myths and mysteries of burial and cremation at a time when people are not grieving.

Lynn Heath, the cemetery's projects manager said: "Death of a loved one is something we all have to come to terms with eventually. If we understand the funeral process, then hopefully we are going to cope with the situation better when we have to face it."

Run by the Corporation of London, the 150-year old cemetery is set in 200 acres of lawn and trees. The victims of Jack the Ripper and inmates of Newgate Prison are among the half-million

souls laid to rest there. Up to 10,000 visitors are expected tomorrow, the fourth annual open-day. East Londoners have a tradition of giving their dead a classy send-off and on parade at the exhibitions by undertakers will be the top-notch black horses and glass-sided carriages used several times a week.

Exhibitors are strictly forbidden from selling services or touting for business. "There is a fine line between something which is dignified and something crass or tacky," observed Mrs Heath. "An event such as this has to be done with taste." That means no ice cream, no alcohol and no bouncy castles, though there is tea and other refreshments.

Cremation has attracted a grisly stock of myths, including taking bodies out of coffins, collecting gold teeth; and no certainty that the ashes are the right ones. To counter such tales, visitors are given a guided tour of the crematorium.

Tomorrow, for the first time, there will be a multi-faith memorial service with contributions from Sikhs, Jews and Hindus as well as from Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Tours of the cemetery will focus on its rich flora and fauna - 168 species of wildflowers and 55 bird species have been identified - the varied geology of the masonry and its ornate funeral architecture.

There will also be public lectures of

the British way of death and on the early history of cemeteries, with tales of autocratic vicars and drunken body snatchers.

The first burial at the Corporation's out-of-town cemetery was in June 1856, three years after church graveyards in the City were condemned as unfit. Currently there are some 1,300 burials and 4,500 cremations each year.

However the Gothic-style catacombs proved unpopular. Of the original 275 cells, into which coffins are placed, only 98 were sold in 130 years and the wings of the crescent-shaped structure have been converted into a columbarium for urns.

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Money-earner: Middlesex University hopes to raise £1.6m from the sale of Anna Pavlova's house. A statue of the ballerina is shown in the estate gardens Photograph: Nicole Kurtz

Fight to save studio where Pavlova danced

One of London's most famous homes is being put up for sale by a university.

Middlesex University hopes to get 1.6m from the sale of a house once owned by the ballerina Anna Pavlova.

The house in Golders Green, north London has been the home of the University's drama department since 1975. Set in listed gardens, designed by Percy Lane, the estate includes two purpose built theatres.

The house itself includes Pavlova's original dance studio and mirror. Middlesex University claims the sale is so it can centralise its drama department at Trent Park in Cockfosters. But campaigners claim the sale is designed to bring in much needed cash. The Save London's Theatre campaign said a sell-off would be a great public loss and called on the university

raise money by hiring out the house and its grounds.

The estate is likely to attract a huge amount of interest. Nijinsky and Charlie Chaplin are among performers who stayed there.

Anna Pavlova, who died in The Hague in 1931, is regarded by many as the greatest ballerina the world has known. Her remains were buried in Golders Green cemetery in north west London, though she reportedly made a dying wish to be returned to her "beloved Russia" upon the fall of Communism.

Born in 1881, the Russian quickly emerged as the most celebrated dancer of her time.

Among her many claims to lasting fame was giving her name to pavlova, a marshmallow and meringue confection topped with whipped cream.

Blair: no stalling on party reform

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair is to confront trade union and left-wing activists at this autumn's Labour Party conference over the next phase of his modernisation project. In a step described by one Downing Street source as "no risk, no gain", he plans to push through reforms designed to remove power from his party's left wing.

The Prime Minister will tell party members today that there will be no compromise over moves to remove power from left-wing activists.

"There is no watering down, no going back," Mr Blair will tell Labour's women and youth conference in Bournemouth. "We must keep modernising. It was courage that brought us victory on May 1, and it will deliver us the victories of the future."

Unions which had been negotiating over possible modifications to the plans were taken by surprise last night. They had been told the Labour leadership would make concessions in order to avoid a conflict at the Brighton conference.

At least a third of constituency parties had asked for a year's delay to the "Labour into Power" project, which includes the ending of the right to put motions to conference. Motions hostile to the plan at this year's conference outnumbered supportive ones by 10 to one - even the Labour Students, usually supportive of Tony Blair, called for postponement.

The proposals in the "Labour

into Power" document include the setting-up of regional policy forums to formulate ideas, reforms to conference and changes likely to remove cabinet ministers and left-wing MPs from the party's National Executive Committee. A Downing Street spokesman said last night that the policy forums would be set up even before the conference had approved the plans.

Mr Blair will tell today's conference that modernisation must continue.

"Modernisation didn't stop on May 1. We won because we are new Labour. We will win again provided we remain new Labour," he will say.

The final report on the proposals will be discussed by the NEC at the end of this month, but sources said last night that it would not be significantly different from the draft produced in February for consultation.

Union spokesmen said they had not been told of the change of heart, and speculated that there would be deep unhappiness over Mr Blair's statement.

Labour backbencher Diane Abbott yesterday blamed "the intolerance of independent thought" of the Labour leadership after being removed from the influential Treasury Select Committee.

In a rare public outburst against Tony Blair by a Labour MP, close friends of the Hackney North and Stoke Newington MP accused spin doctors of trying to impose a "Stalinist" regime.

will be able to speak to each other for the first time," Dr Crozier said. "It is a great opportunity."

More than 40 papers will be given on the theme of social phobia, a mild form of which is said to affect up to a third of the population and a severe form one in 10.

The keynote speech will be given by Philip Zimbardo, from the USA, who pioneered research into shyness and helped set up the Shyness Institute in California, where people can be treated for their problems.

Professor Zimbardo will be talking on the subject of "social fitness training". He will be emphasising "ongoing social fitness workouts, just like physical fitness workouts, to get in 'social shape' and maintain social fitness."

Other papers will investigate the differences between shame and humiliation, children's understanding of being embarrassed by others' actions and anxiety levels among pupils transferring from primary to secondary schools.

Shyness experts keep coyly quiet

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

The first-ever conference on shyness is to be held in Britain next week - but organisers are coy about what will be going on.

They were initially reluctant to advertise and are not sending out press releases. But yesterday Dr Ray Crozier, the conference chief, said: "There has been increasing interest in the topic but there has never been the right opportunity to get together... There has not been a real community of schools investigating shyness so it is timely to have a meeting."

The conference, organised in Cardiff by the Welsh branch of the British Psychological Society, will only be a cosy gathering of about 75 - a much smaller affair than the other conferences of the society, which can attract up to 1,000 delegates.

Psychologists and psychiatrists from the UK, the USA, Canada, Japan and Australia will be attending. "Those who specialise in social phobia, shame and selective mutism

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Boston	BA239/BA238		
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Again, we would like to offer our sincerest apologies to any customers who are being inconvenienced by the industrial action. Rest assured that we are continuing to do all we can to keep disruption to a minimum. If your flight is affected, we will endeavour to organise alternative travel arrangements for you to reach your destination.

BRITISH AIRWAYS

Tour de France: It whizzes by in 20 seconds, but they'll talk about it for 20 years



Soft touch: Crowds lining the Tour route in Vire, Calvados (left) wait for the riders' brief appearance as cheesemakers, part of the associated commercial hub of the event, make the most of a captive audience Photographs: Alister Miller

La France Profonde basks in reflected glory of kings of the road

We bowled at 60mph along straight, narrow, empty roads, hedged by tens of thousands of contented, munching people.

Picture a garden-party 10 yards wide and 130 miles long, stretching across part of Normandy and the breadth of Brittany.

Each village was a festival of drinking and sausage-grilling. Each farmyard had a makeshift table for a score of people, loaded with food and wine.

Children, in school groups, lined the road, screeching with joy. The entire population of old people's homes sat grinning in rows in their wheelchairs, covered in blankets despite the scorching sunshine.

They were waiting for hours, in great patience and great reverence, for 190 of the fittest young men in the world to hum past like a swarm of candy-coloured bees.

As the local newspaper, *Ouest-France*, said: "The Tour de France lasts twenty seconds but people talk about it for 20 years."

I had the great honour to ride in the Tour for a day.

Admittedly, I was riding, and drinking cola, in a bright orange mini-truck belonging to the Ministry of Equipment, Transport, Housing and Tourism.

We were the lead vehicle in a procession 400 cars, 190 bicycles, 3,000 people, 60 miles and 90 minutes long. In the front passenger seat was Jean-François Inizan, who was the ministry's "Monsieur Route", or Mr Road, for that day's stage.

Monsieur Route's job was to inspect the readiness of the road. Was there too much gravel on that bend? Were the patches of new tarmac swelling in the heat to make an invisible hazard for the bikes?

Riding in the lead vehicle in the procession gave an unparalleled opportunity to observe the French - the rural, non-cosmopolitan French - en

masse. French exceptionalism, in terms of casual dress, is clearly dead. A random sample of this crowd, young and old, would not have been out of place in a shopping-mall in Essex or New Jersey. In a 130-mile incursion across La France Profonde, I spotted only three berets. The baseball cap has conquered the world.

At one point, we were overtaken by elements of the high-speed carnival which precedes the race itself, distributing plastic and teeth-rotting largesse to the spectators. To reclaim our leading position, we had to slalom between a giant fibre-glass strawberry on wheels, a giant peach, the space shuttle, a 10-foot camembert and several large coffee-cups.

We turned a corner and screeched to a halt. A mobile Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy had halted, in vee formation, in a rare break

in the crowd. The drivers were peeing, in formation, beside their vehicles. France is an ethnically disparate and very large country, bound together by language, flag, bureaucracy and, for three weeks every July, by the Tour de France.

Yannik Le Du, from the ministry in Paris, squashed into the back of the truck, marvelled at the crowds. "Just look at all the kids. This is what the Tour de France is about. It engraves itself in the memory of the nation from a very early age. It's not just a race: it is rooted in the country itself, it is part of our identity..."

During its anti-clockwise circuit of the country, the Tour is watched by one in six of the French population, an estimated 10 million people, more than any other sporting event. Unlike any other front-line, international sport, people do not have to travel to the Tour de France. It

travels to them. If they are lucky, and patient, it comes, literally, down their way. Hence the celebrations we saw all along the route; it was as if one rally of a Wimbledon final was being played on the village tennis-courts.

Despite the inevitable conversion of the Tour into a commercial and media circus, it has managed to maintain its close contact with the people of France.

Sometimes, too close. A spectator stepped in front of the two leading riders on one stage this week. All three ended up in hospital. There were three serious spills in the first few days, causing some riders to question the sense of taking the Tour through narrow roads and village streets.

The organisers said the problem was that the riders were getting fitter and faster. Did they really want to cycle down autoroutes?

The suspicion remains that the annually changing route is increasingly contorted by non-sporting considerations. Towns and villages lobby and wheedle and pay large sums of money to be the point of departure, or arrival of a daily stage. Vire, in Calvados, a town of 10,000 noted for its fine *andouille* sausages, was the starting point that day. It had paid £70,000 to be on the Tour for the first time in 58 years. But this was just the official fee.

Improvements to roads and other facilities, demanded by the Tour organisers, had cost the little town another £20m.

Before the start, at the Tour's mobile village, I came across René Courastin, treasurer of the Brotherhood of the True Andouille Sausage of Vire, looking rather uncomfortable in his mock-medieval velvet robes. "Yes, it costs a lot of

money but it is worth it in the end," he said. "The whole of France is watching Vire on TV today. The next time they are in this part of the country, they will come to Vire. Before they might have driven past... Now we are the town that was in the Tour de France."

By the time that we arrived in Plumelec, in southern Brittany, I was exhausted. The 3,000 people in the procession had been doing this for four days; they had another 18 days to the finish on the Champs Elysées. If you insist on doing it by bicycle, the Tour de France is the most demanding sporting event known to Man, something like running a marathon every day for three weeks. But, in truth, the Tour is a formidable test of stamina for everyone involved. Imagine driving 2,500 miles from Rouen to Paris, by way of the Pyrenees and the Alps, at the wheel of a giant strawberry.

Race report, page 24

John Lichfield

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What do these all have in common? Try asking the man in charge of Austria's diplomacy



Minister of slurs gets off the hook

Inna Karacs Bonn

The Austrian Foreign Minister, who insulted a handful of world leaders before breakfast, escaped censure yesterday when the Parliament in Vienna decided that his behaviour had in no way besmirched the country's reputation.

Wolfgang Schüssel, the undiplomatic leader of Austrian diplomacy, mustered the government's in-built majority to reject a motion of no confidence tabled by three opposition parties which had questioned the minister's fitness to represent the country abroad.

The more serious question of whether he lied to the public is yet

to be resolved, however. Mr Schüssel is alleged to have made his careless remarks while attending the European Union summit in Amsterdam last month.

During an early-morning meeting with a select group of journalists, he heaped scorn on foreign dignitaries, trusting that the exchange would remain off the record.

Thus Hans Tietmeyer, the president of the Bundesbank, became a "real pig", a Scandinavian prime minister a "wally", and Edith Cresson, former French prime minister and EU commissioner, an "old bag".

No minutes exist of his outpourings, and accounts of his *tour de force* vary. The "wally" referred to might have been a Swede or a Dane, and

there is also something of a controversy over the "real" epithet preceding Mr Tietmeyer's description.

Everyone present seems to agree, however, that Mr Schüssel reserved the worst of his bile for the Bundesbank president. Mr Tietmeyer had just emerged victorious from his battle with the German Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, over the German central bank's gold reserves. The Austrian government, or at least its conservative wing, headed by Mr Schüssel, had evidently backed the loser.

That was the first mistake, but a minor one in comparison to what was to follow. A wiser politician than Mr Schüssel might have kept quiet about that, instead of trumpeting his

antagonism to one of the most powerful men in Europe. And to compound the offence by calling him unflattering names was not entirely statesmanlike.

And so Mr Schüssel was forced to trot to Frankfurt in a hurry, for a "man-to-man" talk with a pig - real or otherwise. Sadly, no account exists of this meeting either, only vivid descriptions of imaginary scenes, with the Foreign Minister in the foreground lying prostrate on the Bundesbank's floor.

Whatever happened, it is safe to assume that a fair amount of goodwill was involved. Suffice to recall that Austria's currency is pegged so close to the Deutschmark that its value and rates of interest are in effect

steered from Frankfurt. Whether Mr Tietmeyer was placated only time and the future movements of the Schilling will tell. It is a pity though that Mr Schüssel did not follow up the gesture with similar pilgrimages to Paris, Washington and the relevant Scandinavian capital. Sadder still, it is a shame that instead of an apology, he spun a flimsy web of falsehoods to cover up his offence.

For it is not so much what Mr Schüssel said, but his elaborate denials afterwards, that led to yesterday's vote. He had never had that meeting with journalists, he claimed, and went on to accuse the German magazine *Focus*, which broke the story, of malicious slander.

The other journalists present at

the same briefing confirmed the *Focus* story, however, and proceeded to dredge up Schüsselsms of old from previous encounters.

The Foreign Minister is thus credited with the description "an ageing Bette Davis" for Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State.

And President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus is reported to rejoice under the nickname "that smelly Turk".

As to the official account of the Amsterdam non-meeting, the editor of the respected *Salzburger Nachrichten*, whose reporter claims to have been present, had the following to say: "Wolfgang Schüssel is lying."

It can be argued, as it was, force-

fully, in yesterday's debate, that Mr Schüssel is a PR disaster on the scale of the Waldheim controversy.

But Austria will not be rid of him, because the People's Party he leads keeps the Socialist-conservative coalition in power. Should Mr Schüssel be kicked out, the government would collapse, and the extremist Jörg Haider could no longer be kept away from the trough.

Mr Haider, heading the country's second-biggest party, might not enhance Austria's international standing either, though at least he could be trusted not to say unpleasant things about German leaders.

He is on record expressing admiration for the economic policies of Hitler.

Secret of Lord of the Skies' killer goes to the grave

Phil Davison Latin America Correspondent

At Amado Carrillo Fuentes' wake, everyone was speculating: did narcotics agents eliminate him or was it his rivals?

Who killed "the Lord of the Skies"? Did US anti-narcotics agents discreetly eliminate their public enemy number one while he was undergoing plastic surgery in a Mexico City hospital?

In scenes reminiscent of *The Godfather*, Mexican mourners paid their last respects yesterday to South America's leading drug lord, Amado Carrillo Fuentes, nicknamed for his use of converted passenger aircraft to fly cocaine from Colombia to Mexico before smuggling it across the border into the United States.

The 42-year-old Mexican pease-

ant's son had taken over from the Medellín cartel's Pablo Escobar, as well as Colombia's other major cocaine trafficker, as the biggest shipper of cocaine to American cities, making an estimated \$100m (£50m) a month and paying off thousands of local, state and federal government officials to get his shipments through.

Most of the mourners who arrived in Guaymas, his home village on Mexico's Pacific coast, in luxury vehicles with tinted windows and without number plates were asking the same questions: how did he die? Did

rival drug lords "rub him out" or were the gringos involved possibly by infiltrating his bodyguards? Whatever the case, US agents predict a violent turf war between his Juárez Cartel, now likely to be headed by his 34-year-old brother, Vicente, and rival gangs in Tijuana and the Mexican Gulf coast.

The fact that he was mysteriously found dead on the Fourth of July, the Americans' Independence Day holiday, was seen by some as pointing the finger at US agents, or at least Mexican agents under US direction. The

US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) said it believed the official Mexican version that Carrillo Fuentes had died of a heart attack around 4am on 4 July in Mexico City's private Santa Monica hospital after undergoing liposuction and plastic surgery to alter his appearance. The Mexican television network Televisa, closest to the government, cited sources at the hospital as saying the drug lord, whose net worth was estimated at \$25bn, may have been killed by a lethal injection, or an *almohadazo*, suffocation by a pil-

low held over him by a bodyguard. The Mexican daily, *La Jornada*, said a "hit" ordered by US DEA agents was one of the most likely theories, choosing 4 July as a strong hint to other fugitive drug lords. DEA officials denied involvement. Mexican officials were also questioning three doctors who had performed the plastic surgery and are now under police protection fearing for their lives. A fourth, Brazilian doctor reportedly fled back to Brazil. He and two of the Mexican doctors were apparently brought to

the hospital by the drug lord, who took over an entire floor and a maternity wing and posted bodyguards with automatic weapons around his room. Adding to suspicions of US involvement was the fact that the DEA chief, Thomas Constantine, was among the first to say, on 6 July, that he believed the man who died in the hospital, although listed Antonio Flores Montes, was Carrillo Fuentes. "He may have escaped earthly justice, but I'm sure there's a special place in hell for those like him who have

destroyed countless human lives," Mr Constantine said. The DEA confirmed the identification two days later, on 8 July, citing fingerprint evidence, while Mexico's Attorney General's office said it was still not sure until Thursday when it said that DNA evidence confirmed it was the cocaine baron. Meanwhile, in Guaymas, dozens of Mexican troops searched mourners leaving his wake for weapons yesterday before a private family burial at his mother's ranch. Some appeared to be drug lords, dressed in

snakeskin cowboy boots and stiletos. Others were local farmers who insisted Carrillo Fuentes was a good man, a kind of Robin Hood, who had built a school, a church and volleyball court and who had helped them out when they needed money. Earlier, the family had allowed journalists into the ranch, making no bones about the fact the journalists were being used as human shields in case of an army raid. Relatives recalled the last time Carrillo Fuentes was at the ranch, in January, for the wedding of his younger sister, Aurora. The army launched a massive raid on the wedding but the drug lord escaped.

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Saddam's athletes tripped up at visa hurdle

Robert Fisk
Masnaa, on the
Lebanese-Syrian border

On the front of their bus, next to a photograph of Saddam Hussein wearing a stylish Bavarian hat, a handwritten notice declared the visitors to be "the elite of the Iraqi soccer team". The second bus, filled with Iraqi shot-putters, weightlifters and runners, bore a more peculiar portrait of the leader of the Arab Socialist Baath Party of Iraq: Saddam in a turban, inspecting a pot of meat on a domestic cooking stove while dropping in for a chat with local Baghdad residents.

The Lebanese, however, did not take so kindly to the 97 Iraqi athletes in their blue tracksuits who dropped in to visit them yesterday. For after travelling for three days across the Iraqi and Syrian deserts to participate in Beirut's pan-Arab games, the sportsmen and women of Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basra were met by that most familiar of all pan-Arab greetings: no visa.

"I will tell you something,"

one of them muttered to me darkly. "This is a game." Indeed it was. And Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were winning — though they were not the only players; Syria, Turkey, Israel, even the United States had their indirect role to play in the plight of the Iraqis marooned beside the frontier rubbish-tip at Masnaa.

Surrounded by old tyres, rusting Pepsi cans and crushed cigarette packets, they prayed towards Mecca on their little rugs, or sat perspiring in their tracksuits, brandishing the red-white-and-black Iraqi flag. But no way would the Lebanese frontier guards open the road to Beirut and the shiny new sports stadium where President Elias Hrawi of Lebanon will today launch the pan-Arab games.

Dr Mohamed Ridha, the Iraqi track coach (educated University of Colorado) asked why the Arab League had invited his team to the games without ensuring visas for them at the border. "Lebanon should say 'our country is your home

— we want to show you our hospitality," he complained. "You know, it's not good to leave all these nice athletes under the sun here, without water, without anything. It's very miserable."

The problem, of course, is that just seven years ago, the Iraqis turned up unexpectedly on another border in rather larger numbers. And when Kuwait decided that it was not Saddam's home, the Iraqi army invaded the emirate which now — liberated by America and its allies but still furious at Iraq's

failure to return 600 missing citizens — has no intention of running, jumping or even standing still beside its former tormentors, especially in a stadium partly built with Kuwaiti money. Saudi Arabia, which footed another sixth of the bill, felt the same way about it.

Not that the athletes looked very threatening. Dr Sadik Thilab, president of the Iraqi Weightlifting Federation, turned out to be a grey-haired graduate of Syracuse University. And 18-year-old Maissa Hussein, a petite track athlete

with a pig-tail who had won a bronze at the Asian Games in Indonesia two years ago, did nothing more bellicose than smile at the cameras with an Iraqi flag draped fetchingly round her shoulders.

Said Abdul-Hussein, a boxing coach, insisted that the Iraqis merely wished to show "Arab solidarity and Arab brotherhood, translated into action at the games".

True, a few of the Iraqi athletes looked rather paunchy, nursing the kind of beer-bellies that might seem more familiar

on ... well, on Iraqi secret service agents. But there was no doubting the sympathy of the locals. Syrian taxi drivers waved cheerfully at the stranded athletes, punching the air with their fists. And Syria, supposedly not on speaking terms with Iraq, had given the athletes an unprecedented open visa when they turned up on the closed Iraqi-Syrian border on Thursday.

No one would explain why, but it wasn't difficult to guess. As Syria has grown ever more critical of Turkey's new military

relationship with Israel — Israeli fighter-pilots can now fly in Turkish airspace north of the Syrian border — so Damascus has been opening up economic and cultural ties with Iraq. And how better to signal its continued warmth towards Baghdad — and refusal to accept an Israeli-Turkish military strangulation — than to let the 97 Iraqis travel towards Lebanon? If the Americans — enthusiastic supporters of the Israeli-Turkish alliance — did not like it, so much the better.

Back at the Lebanese border

yesterday afternoon, the Iraqi athletes were counting the medals they still hoped to win at the games they cannot attend. Five golds with a spread of silvers and bronzes, they thought, with just a hint of Saddamite exaggeration. Asel Tabra, the head of the Iraqi delegation, had gone off to demand — at the least — a document which formally forbade the Iraqis entry. No such luck. For the Iraqis have not been refused permission to enter Lebanon; they just did not have visas. If only it was always that simple.



Desert training: The Iraqi boxing team keep in trim during their journey to the pan-Arab games in Beirut. Lebanon is refusing to issue the Iraqi athletes visas

Photograph: AP

Britain urged to take third party role in Mid-East

Steve Crawshaw

One of the architects of the Oslo peace accords spoke in London yesterday of the need to launch a new peace initiative in Israel, and argued that Britain could play a leading role.

Yossi Beilin, a former deputy foreign minister, said: "Meeting with Robin Cook and others, I

Oslo accord veteran says that now US has left the scene, a vacancy exists for the role of Arab-Israeli mediator

see an interest in Britain being involved in the Middle East. People understand the ramifications of an explosion."

The deal proposed by Mr Beilin is a half-way house package, which would create a political ceasefire, while at the

same time allowing both sides to avoid committing themselves as talks continue behind closed doors.

He insisted it was essential that such talks remain secret: "Reporting daily would be a prescription for failure." The

existence of such talks, would, however, be public knowledge — unlike the talks which led to the breakthrough in the Oslo peace deal.

In practice, however, it is therefore difficult to imagine that potentially damaging leaks

would not take place from both sides.

Mr Beilin suggested that Israel should "pause" for six months with its plans to build housing at the site known to Israelis as Har Homa. The Palestinian leadership, for its

part, would do everything in its power to stop street violence. During that period, further talks would take place on redeployment of Israeli troops, together with "negotiations on a final solution" — including an agreement on borders.

Mr Beilin argued that such a package deal might "fulfil the interests and expectations of both sides". But, he said, it was impossible "without a third party".

This third party, he suggested, could be Britain, now that the United States has in effect withdrawn from its active role in the Middle East peace process.

"The Americans have left the region — and have just left us some phone numbers where we can reach them." Without the intervention of a third party, Mr Beilin said, "I

see the danger of an explosion".

Mr Beilin said that the British government had given a cautious welcome to his proposals. "Nobody said: 'It's a wonderful idea, let's roll up our sleeves.' But nobody threw me out of the window." He was

sceptical about the chances of survival of the hawkish Benjamin Netanyahu and his government, saying: "It's almost a miracle that it still exists. The fragmented coalition could fall apart, any day." But he added a cautionary note, too: "Because it's so weak, it could survive."

Mr Beilin held meetings this week with Mr Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and with Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development. Israel was furious at recent comments by Ms Short on

Palestinians, where she spoke of "the unfairness of the world's expectation that [Palestinians] should make sacrifices to make up for the evil done by Europeans during the Holocaust". As a sign of official displeasure, the Israeli ambassador stayed away from the ministerial meeting.

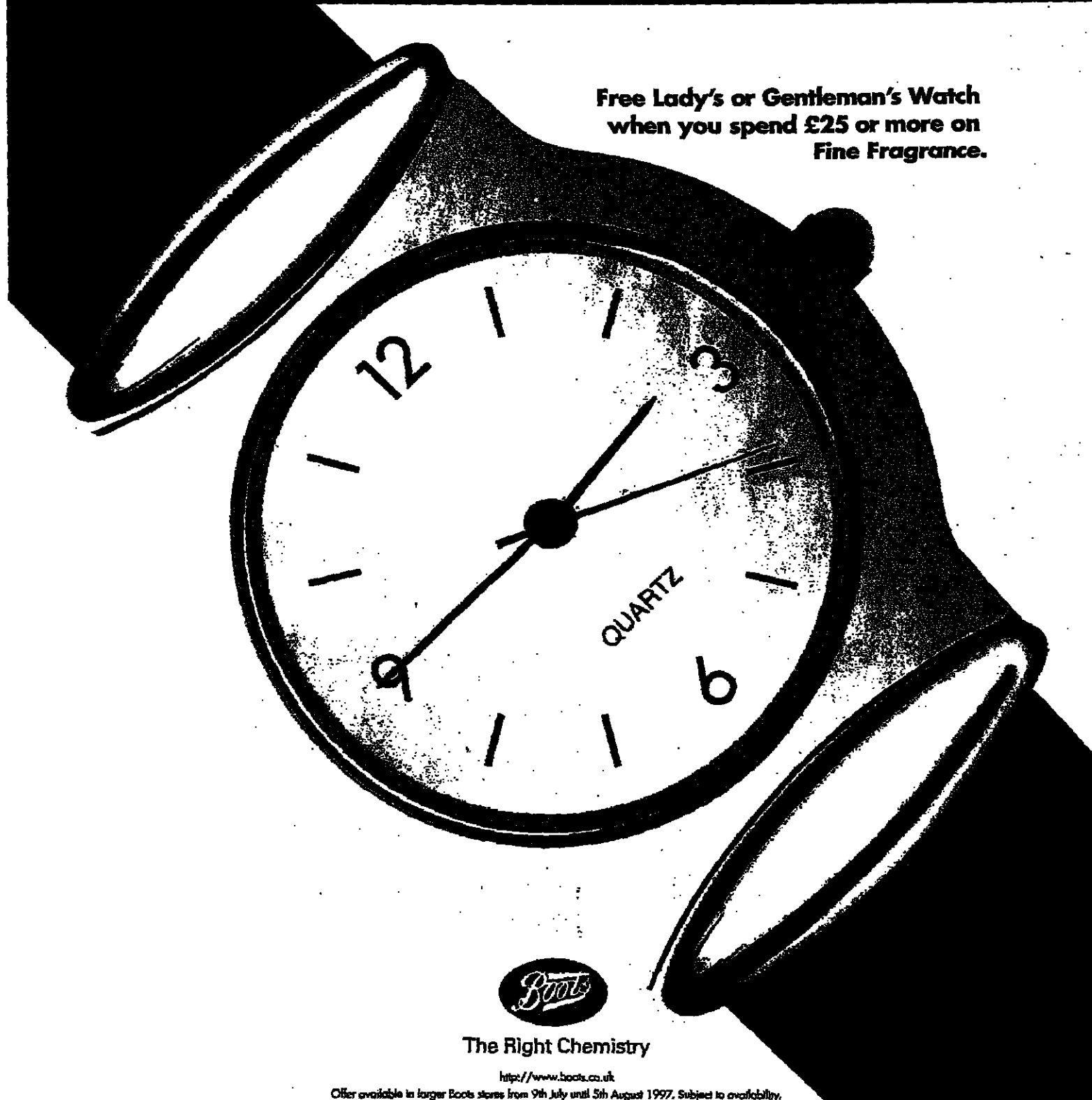
Hebron, West Bank (AP) — Palestinian demonstrators yesterday hurled stones, fire bombs and homemade explosives at Israeli soldiers.

Twenty rioters were injured by rubber bullets fired by Israeli troops, including a 12-year-old child left partially paralysed by a head wound.

Palestinians threw a pipe bomb into the courtyard of an elementary school that had been seized by soldiers as a lookout. There were no pupils in the building because of the summer holidays.

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Coup victor's round-up strikes fear in Cambodia

Matthew Chance
Phnom Penh

Fearful and exhausted, a mother waves to her three-year-old son as he boards a flight from his fractured homeland. For the moment at least, she is staying in alone to help others threatened by Cambodia's new regime to leave the country.

For her own safety, this local aid worker and human rights activist asked not to be identified. "The situation for anyone who has been critical of Hun Sen in the past is extremely dangerous right now," she says, her bloodshot eyes straining after a week of anxiety and sleepless nights.

Over recent days, since an effective coup d'état swept Hun Sen, Cambodia's second joint prime minister, into sole power, thousands have been living in fear.

"Hundreds of people have already been arrested in the provinces, all of them opposition figures, independent human rights activists and journalists who the new regime sees as a threat," she says.

Her figures, confirmed by United Nations officials in Phnom Penh, are disturbing. In the picturesque north-western province of Siem Reap, home to the ancient Angkor Wat temples, at least 100 people have been detained, she says. Most are civil servants affiliated with FUNCINPEC, the political party of the ousted Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

A further 31 people are being held in eastern Preay Veng, 20 miles from Phnom Penh province. Across the country an estimated 300 people have disappeared from their homes in the past five days, including a prominent FUNCINPEC governor Serey Mondul. According to human rights workers, they are being held by armed cadres of Hun Sen's Communist People's Party (CPP), which is rooting out its political opponents.

"The fighting has mostly stopped,



Uneasy streets: Hundreds have been arrested or disappeared

the looting has ended, but there is widespread fear on the streets," said David Hawk, head of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia.

Hun Sen has invited his opponents to join a new coalition government and has been publicly assuring them of their safety. But the executions earlier this week of two senior FUNCINPEC officials has intimidated others and driven most into hiding.

There are unconfirmed reports of other killings: human rights groups are expressing particular concern about the fate of some 150 people believed to have been detained in the northern province of Kampong Cham. And aid workers are reporting an increasing number of opposition figures being taken out of the country.

In Washington, the State Department has sent what it says is a "clear signal" of disapproval to Hun Sen: it is suspending aid to Cambodia for a period of 30 days. Japan and Canada have followed

suit. But Hun Sen has remained defiant, perhaps gambling that the international community at large may stand back from Cambodia and allow his heavy-handed rule.

"Many governments recognise that the two-headed coalition of Ranariddh and Hun Sen did not work," says Raoul Jenar, a political analyst living in Phnom Penh. "Despite the fact that he is brutal, diplomats, the World Bank, and businessmen all recognise that Hun Sen is a man with whom they can operate."

"Much now depends on how Hun Sen can portray his government to the world. If he can convene the National Assembly, pass laws, and promise to hold elections next year, I think the majority of countries - while condemning his actions - will accept him," he says.

But for the moment, more nations are evacuating their citizens and expatriates are leaving in their thousands. Bert Hoak, the American proprietor of the travellers' meeting-place Bert's Books, packs his things on Cambodian culture and travel in readiness for his own journey to the airport.

His imminent departure is a measure of the uncertainty that is gripping many here. "I will not work in a country with this kind of government. I refuse to keep my family in an environment of fear where there is no democracy and no human rights," he says angrily.

His wife, an ethnic Khmer, is saying her goodbyes to the family she is leaving behind to face what many believe could be Cambodia's new dictatorship.

Yesterday, the Australian air force picked up its country's citizens, and those of Canada, as hundreds of dismayed Cambodian faces pressed hard against the mesh fences which surround the runway.

"You are abandoning us again," shouted one man, an elderly taxi driver standing at the bent steel gates near the devastated terminal. But few of those departing heard his call.



Rescue: Three stages of a girl's rescue from the fire that raged through the Royal Jomtien Resort hotel in Thailand yesterday

Hotel blamed as fire kills 78 at Thai beach resort

Jiraporn Wongsathorn
Associated Press

Pattaya — Fire raged through a 17-story luxury hotel yesterday in the beach resort city of Pattaya, killing at least 78 people, including eight Westerners, police said.

Police said more bodies may be inside, and firefighters continued searching through the smoke-filled 450-room Royal Jomtien Resort on Jomtien Beach, 110km (68 miles) south of Bangkok.

Survivors said they heard no fire alarms, the hotel apparently had no sprinklers, and emergency exits were found locked.

Firefighters had the blaze under control by mid-afternoon, but took until 9pm to extinguish it. Rescue workers used cranes and floodlights through the night to search the top stories.

The Thai Interior Minister, Suth Thienthong, blamed the high number of fatalities on hotel operators who locked emergency exits to prevent customers from leaving without paying.

Police said many of the bodies were found near the locked emergency doors. In addition to the dead, at least 64 people were injured. Many were seriously burned.

Police said eight Westerners were among the dead, but could identify them only as five men and three women.

More than 30 Thai killed have so far been identified, including 17 employees of the state-owned Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand and several members of the local subsidiary of PepsiCo, who were attending seminars at the hotel. Eleven hotel workers also perished.

The fire started at about 9am when a gas oven exploded in a first floor coffee shop, police said. It quickly spread to other floors, searing black burn marks into the building's white facade from the ground floor to the roof.

Hundreds of people watched from the pavement as people screamed for help and waved towels from windows on the upper floors. A man jumped from an 11th-floor window to avoid the flames, and died. Rescue workers carried out dozens of charred, blackened bodies.

The black plume of smoke stretched far above the white sand beach as three police helicopters, navigating their way through it, plucked terrified guests from the hotel roof.

Rescue teams on the roof dropped harnesses down to guests who made it to the top floor and were crying for help from windows as smoke billowed out behind them.

Rochelle Stein-Sami, an American, told ITV television that no smoke alarms sounded, no sprinklers went off and there were no warnings of any kind. The mayor of Pattaya, who called the fire the city's worst tragedy, also said the hotel did not have sprinklers.

Ms Stein-Sami was able to use her mobile phone to call from her top-floor room to a friend on the street standing next to police. They told her helicopters were on the way.

Television crews filmed her daughter as she was lifted in a harness, still clutching her brown teddy bear, to rescue workers on the roof and bundled into a helicopter.

Firefighters siphoned water from the hotel pool to fight the blaze, which is thought to have caused at least \$40m (£24m) in damage.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh called Pattaya "Thailand's greatest source of evil."

Bangkok has had a high number of hotel and department store fires in recent years. Fire safety experts in Thailand say many buildings don't meet basic safety standards.

In 1993, 188 people died in a fire at the Kader Toy factory in the north-east. Police said factory supervisors had locked emergency exits to prevent workers from taking breaks.

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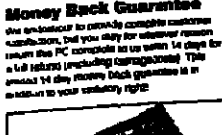
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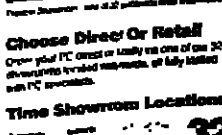
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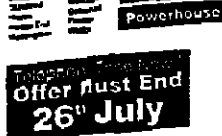
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obituaries / gazette

Ivor Allchurch

People who believe that football in the United Kingdom has never been better represented than it is by players now turning out in the Premier League are ignorant of standards set more than 40 years ago by the first generation of post-war professionals. Born before the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 and thus denied the benefits of organised development, they revealed a raw instinct for the game, providing the impetus that led to England's victory in the 1966 World Cup final and successes in European club football.

Remarkably, a number came from an area of South Wales centred on the old port of Swansea. It served up John Charles who achieved great fame in Italy with Juventus and, for the local Second Division club, then known as Swansea Town, a forward line made up entirely of Welsh internationals: Harry Griffiths, Terry Medwin, Ivor Allchurch, Len Allchurch, and Cliff Jones.

All but Griffiths moved on, Jones achieving great distinction in the colours of Tottenham Hotspur, but none captured the imagination more than Ivor Allchurch, who became known as the "Golden Boy" of Welsh football.

Tall, blond, strong and elegant with a loping stride that carried him effortlessly past opponents, Allchurch was a classic inside forward, a master of the defence-splitting pass whose goals resulted frequently from the violent accuracy of his long-range shooting.

Discovered in local football by Swansea's trainer, Joe Sykes, and recruited to the ground staff, Allchurch made his senior debut in 1949 after completing National Service with the Army. He was an immediate success and in 1951 gained the first of 68 caps, a record only broken in 1986 by Joey Jones of Wrexham. Liverpool and Chelsea joined in the Swansea and

Wales teams by a younger brother, Len, he made 330 league appearances, scoring 124 goals before a belated move to the First Division with Newcastle United.

A BBC television documentary about Swansea footballers seen recently in Wales brought back the extent of Allchurch's brilliance. "I didn't have to be reminded that Ivor was a great player," Cliff Jones said. "He had the lot, including a marvellous temperament and would have been a sensation in the game today. Things were a lot different then. Because of the maximum wage players couldn't better themselves financially from a transfer and Ivor was always a home-town boy. It was a bit late by the time he joined Newcastle but I'm sure that if he'd gone to a big English club earlier we'd be speaking about one of the all-time greats."

After many attempts to prise Allchurch away from Swansea had failed (Wolverhampton Wanderers made repeated offers), he was sold to Newcastle for £28,000 in October 1958 after representing Wales in the World Cup finals in Sweden, their only appearance. The late Dave Bowen, who captained that team and Arsenal, recalled, "I'm sure we surprised a lot of people, that they looked at Ivor and wondered where he had been hiding. He could have played for any of the teams out there, including Brazil who only just managed to beat us in the quarter-finals. Every time I got back to Arsenal after playing for Wales I implored them to try and sign Ivor, and if there hadn't been so many outstanding youngsters coming through at Manchester United I know that they would have made a big effort to sign him."

What Allchurch needed was a big stage on which to display his exceptional talent. Although admired greatly by Newcastle's supporters, scoring 46 goals in 143 league appearances, he



Master of the defence-splitting pass: Allchurch, the "Golden Boy" of Welsh football

was denied any of soccer's great prizes and his transfer value had fallen to £15,000 when he signed for Cardiff City in August 1962. Retaining a passion for the game, Allchurch played on for many years, rejoining Swansea in 1965 and then appearing in non-league football for Worcester City, Haverfordwest and Pontardawe Athletic before retiring in his forties.

As a member of Swansea's playing staff briefly in the 1950s I got to know Allchurch, but not intimately. Sometimes we'd take the same path home from training but he wasn't much for idle conversation. Unassuming, he took his fame lightly. He had a slow smile and a quiet way of speaking. An exceptional footballer, it is no exaggeration to suggest that Ivor Allchurch

today would be valued in eight figures.

Ken Jones

Ivor John Allchurch, footballer: born Swansea 16 December 1929; played for Swansea 1947-58, Newcastle United 1958-62, Cardiff City 1962-65, Swansea 1965-68, Worcester City 1968-70; MBE 1966; married (two sons); died Swansea 10 July 1997.

Michael Hand

Michael Hand was an award-winning and richly talented journalist, but as a raconteur and gossip he was a Dublin institution.

Best known as Editor of the *Sunday Independent* in Dublin and earlier as the roving author of the *Sunday Press's* "Down Your Way" column, a weekly chronicle of life where the roads were bad, Mick, or "Mickster" to his cronies, carried another dimension of colour and real-life human quirkiness to the printed page.

He came from Drogheda and never lost the warm glowing accent of the mainly working-class port on the Boyne. He worked first on the *Argus* newspaper, after appearing for interview on behalf of his identical twin brother, Jim. The employers failed to catch the ruse and by the time they did Michael had his feet well planted under the desk. He was allowed to stay.

After Drogheda he rose through the ranks, working at the Irish News Agency, then the *Dublin Evening News*, the *Sunday Review*, and the *Sunday Press*. His gentle manner enabled him to mix easily with and win confidences from both sides during Northern Ireland coverage which included the horrors of the Shankill Butchers' atrocities in the early Seventies.

His personality was the anti-thesis of *Daily Mail* foot-in-the-door pushiness. His special talent was putting interviewees at their ease, patiently guiding them in a confessional direction, drawing out stories in rich and curious detail. This required enormous duty in innumerable bars, a burden he endured for the greater good of journalism.

Appointed editor of the *Sunday Independent* in 1976, Hand encouraged witty columnists such as the playwright Hugh Leonard. With his younger, more forceful assistant, Michael Denieffe, he brought to the news pages both an edge and more rounded background to larger stories, giving the public livelier reading and consolidating circulation. Leonard himself



Hand: extensive lunches

would recount the pleasure of the extensive lunches Hand felt appropriate to arrange whenever a new contract loomed.

Unlike more charged colleagues, Hand seldom seemed ruffled by the tensions of production deadlines. He had a sure, confident touch for the angle and presentation of a story.

Though his Flanna Fail sympathies were at odds with the previous colouring of the *Independent Newspapers* stable in Abbey Street, he attracted no enemies among editorial ranks. His disregard for confining budgets however created nervous trauma for his financial masters on the fourth floor.

His political leanings enabled the publishers to assert that there was not a blind Fine Gael adherence, an allegiance in any case unravelling by the mid-Eighties as the FF leader Charles Haughey, encouraged by his aide PJ. Mara, wooed editors with a long-lunch offensive. Hand, already an admirer, found himself the recipient of Christmas presents including the finest *grand cru* wines with specially printed labels proclaiming "To Mr Michael Hand from his friend Charles J. Haughey".

His droll wit could hit a target but without showing malice. At an annual review of progress by the company's titles, Hand explained he was wooing a wider

audience with expanded arts coverage, led by a competition for poets and short-story writers. When a junior director, keen to impress the chairman, interjected to ask "And what sort of people entered?" there was a lethal pause as Hand fixed him with a stare and replied: "Mainly poets and short-story writers."

His capacity for food was considerable. At home he would reportedly take an entire rice pudding into another room to avoid sharing it. At Abbey Street he became the centre of a coterie of bon vivants who dined frequently and grandly as guests at Sean Kinsella's "Mitre" in Sandycove, south Dublin. He appreciated the company of women, and they seemed to like him too.

A particular close colleague was the voluble and iconoclastic social diarist John Feeney. When Feeney and his close colleagues Kevin Marren, Tony Heffernan and Niall Hanley died in a light plane crash on the south coast of England in 1984, Hand was devastated. Losing his closest friends drained away much of the pleasure of work. He had himself only pulled out of the funeral trip at a late stage.

After the *Sunday Independent*, Hand moved to the rival *Sunday Tribune*, penning a variety of features and larger assignments including travelling to

Africa - despite having earlier suffered a stroke - where his poignant writing caught the full tragedy of events in Rwanda and won him an award in 1994.

Unfailingly warm, genial and good-natured, Hand gave generous encouragement to a long line of aspiring reporters. When he and his brother Jim were treated to a joint 50th birthday party in Scruffy Murphy's pub, the event was attended by admirers from all walks of public life. A Dublin magazine observed of one former beauty queen clad in a minute dress: "Parts of her anatomy seemed to be forming an escape committee."

Michael Hand's easy-going manner could also get him into trouble. Returning late at night from a restaurant after earlier hospitality in the *Dail*, he was accosted by a patrolling garda. After rolling down the car window, the officer ventured gently, "And would it be the case that you have drunk taken, Sir?" Hand replied candidly, "Ten out of ten, Sherlock." A summons duly followed.

Alan Murdoch

Michael Hand, journalist: born Drogheda, Co. Louth 5 May 1936; Editor, *Sunday Independent* 1976-84; married (two daughters); died Dublin 10 July 1997.

W. O. G. Lofts

W. O. G. Lofts was one of the great researchers of the century. He was assiduous in his literary explorations and excavations, almost pedantically so. If you mentioned in passing that you had had trouble tracking down the death certificate of a certain obscure author, a week or so later he would present you with the information, together with the colour of the coffin he was shuffled off in and the wood it was made of.

He was a more or less permanent fixture in the Reading Room of the British Museum for nearly 50 years, although he was equally at home trawling through the births/deaths ledgers at Somerset House, then St Catherine's House, as well as the Public Records Office, Companies House, and the British Library Newspaper Archive at Colindale. He rarely made the kind of assumptive leaps some researchers can produce at the snap of two fingers; his watchword was "Dogged does it", and with him, it did. Given a task - a short story to find somewhere in two decades' worth of a pre-war daily newspaper, say, or the birth-and-death dates of a minor Victorian author - he would follow it through to the end. His failures were rare.

William Oliver Guillemont Lofts was born in Marylebone, London, in 1923. His schooling, at Barrow Hill Road Elementary (adjacent to Lord's Cricket Ground) was rudimentary; in 1940, at the age of 17, he joined the Zenith Carburettor Co as an apprentice engineer, staying with them until 1968. It was the continual roar of engine in the firm's machine shops which almost certainly destroyed his hearing. In later years he was profoundly deaf, and could not function without a hearing-aid (although at times he used this aid as a weapon - shyly turning it off, or making it "whistle" - against bores, fools, braggarts and scoundrels, all of whom crossed his path quite frequently, in one way or another).

In 1968 he joined a large West End PR firm as a "messenger". This by no means meant a job involving not a great deal of work (he regularly potted around central London with quantities of cash, valuable documents, crucial legal papers needing signing), but enabled him, back at the office, to sit like a spider at the centre of his web, using the firm's phone to do his real business of contacting authors and gossiping with friends.

On occasion his phone calls took an hour or so to complete. The directors, however, never minded, since Lofts was always happy to do private jobs for them at the British Library, say, or Somerset House, tracking down ancestors to the third, fourth or fifth generation. One of his finest coups was discovering that one of his employer's ancestors had been deported to Australia for sheep-stealing, then hanged for highway robbery. The director in question dined out on the tale for years.

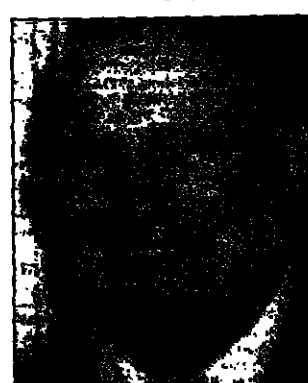
For most of the 1960s through to the 1980s he did a good deal of highly confidential work for the legal department of what was then the biggest purveyor of printed entertain-

ment in the world, IPC Magazines (then part of the Mirror Group). This mainly concerned copyright problems, and involved much tugging around in the births and deaths ledgers at Somerset House.

Quite often, however, real and damaging secrets - whether from 80 years ago, or the previous month - had to be revealed to him; as a consequence Lofts knew where quite a few of the bodies were buried, and like the courier at the court of King Midas had, as it were, to whisper to the trees. Thus, every 18 months or so, trusted friends would receive a letter full of the most stupendous libels - all true, but not easily provable - about various household names.

His other method of letting off steam was to announce suddenly, when visiting you, in the middle of a companionable silence: "Of course, he was Hyde Park", or, "Of course, his father was a Nazi war criminal". As one's lower jaw flung against one's chest and one managed to articulate the one word "Who?" he would airily wave a hand, say, "You know - him", and then his hearing-aid would conveniently start whistling.

As a boy Bill Lofts read the *Gem* and the *Magnet* (home of Billy Bunter) as well as various D.C. Thomson papers such as



Lofts: whispering to the trees

Rover, Wizard and Adventure (which, in truth, he secretly preferred to the Frank Richards papers), but it was not until 1944, as a humble squaddie in the jungles of Burma, chasing the Japanese, that he had a kind of "road to Damascus" experience, stumbling across a Sexton Blake paperback in a deserted hut.

Sparked off by this experience Lofts became fascinated by juvenile literature, and after the war gained a British Library reader's ticket and began a lifetime's research into the subject, as well as popular fiction in general, although it was always the authors and their lives that attracted him rather than their work.

He was never a great reader. Or indeed a collector, although at one stage he put together the largest collection of "Number Ones" (the premier issues of story-papers, comics, women's magazines and other popular fiction journals from the 1890s through to the 1970s) in the world. Which he then sold, the price being right. When he bought old story-papers it was usually for clients - there were two or three elderly Hollywood expats who paid top dollar for quality material whose collec-

tions would not have been his as valuable without Bill Lofts.

In his younger days he made himself indispensable to the Sexton Blake crowd (both editors and writers) by acting as a banker to feckless backs such as the late Jack Trevor Story and Wilf McEilly, cashing cheques that even the landlords of Fley Street and Ludgate Circus at termooon drinking dens would touch. He never charged interest, and he always got his money back. Quite often he intervened in spousal rows on more than one occasion deflecting flying crockery.

He had other adventures. While visiting the well-appointed home of one of the most celebrated collectors of Victorian "blooms" (*Village of the Vampire*, *The Feast of Blood*, *Spring-Heeled Jack*, *The String of Pearls*, etc), and looking for the bathroom as his bid was making the tea downstairs, he opened the wrong door, and found himself in a fully equipped and clearly well-used torture chamber.

During the 1950s he fell in with another researcher into old boys'/girls' books and papers, the late Derek Kidley. It was a perfect match: Kidley never owned a BL reader's ticket and seldom mixed with collectors: since his wife Velestet the breed, but he kept to keep records, building up lists of magazines, journals, comics, story-papers. Lofts supplied the raw information which Kidley then collated. Over the years they issued a score or more of invaluable (though often deplorably printed) checklists, bibliographies and identification guides, including: *The Raper's Bear Index* (1979); *William, a bibliography* (1980); *The Thriller: a checklist* (1983); *Detective Weekly: a bibliography* (1987); *Origins of the Boys' Friend Library* (1987).

Neither were natural writers. Lofts in particular had almost no idea how to construct a paragraph so that it duly followed on from the previous one. Most of the editors of the journals he wrote for put in an extra hour on his appallingly typed pieces, since Lofts's natural code was baffling. During the 1970s, as an editor of IPC and later as a freelance, I cleaned up, at times imply ghosted, countless articles for various journals; even full-length works such as *The World of Frank Richards* (1975) at the face-lift treatment. The one that slipped through the net was *The Saint and Lady Chatterley* (1970), a book so bad a note new category of awfulness light to have been created for it.

But then he wasn't a scholar, and he wasn't an academic. He was simply a stubborn plougher through dusty old volumes who made countless important in some cases startling, discoveries about the kinds of writers who never appear in reference books and who, but for Bill Lofts and a few others like him (although there was never anyone remotely like Bill) would remain forever in an unjust oblivion.

Jack Arden

William Oliver Guillemont Lofts, writer, researcher, engineer: born London 2 September 1923; died London 27 June 1997.

Alexander Cordell

An inn named after Alexander Cordell may become as much a Mecca for his devotees as Brown's Hotel in Langham is for Dylan Thomas enthusiasts, writes Tony Heath (further to the obituary by Miss Stephens, 11 July).

The Cordell Country Inn stands halfway up the winding B4246 road linking the village of Govilon with Blaenavon.

Overlooking the Usk valley, it was named after the writer following a chance meeting with Graham Jones and his wife Margaret, when they were converting the building from a house to a pub.

They became friends and today a picture of Cordell hangs over the fireplace and prints from *Rape of the Fair Country* decorate the walls. Paul Flynn, MP for Newport West, remembers visiting the inn with parliamentary colleague, Huw Edwards, MP for Monmouth, and a Cordell devotee. When they walked in, Cordell was sitting down having a meal. "How couldn't he believe it - he said afterwards it was like meeting Shakespeare," Flynn recalls.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

COVENTRY: James Edward Campbell who died in St Albans at home on 8 July 1997. Formerly a meteorologist and climatologist. Loved by his wife Sheila and family. Funeral service to be held at United Reformed Church, Homewood Road, St Albans, on Friday 18 July 1997 at 11am followed by private cremation at West Herts Crematorium. All further inquiries to Phillips Funeral Services, telephone 01272 651006.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding announcements, Memorials) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephone 0171-235 2811 (24-hour answering machine 0171-235 2812) or faxed to 0171-235 2818, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of York today presents the prospect of a royal wedding. The Duke of York, Prince Andrew, is engaged to the daughter of a Lord. The Duke of York, Prince Andrew, is engaged to the daughter of a Lord. The Duke of York, Prince Andrew, is engaged to the daughter of a Lord.

Changing of the Guard TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment (The Queen's Life Guard) will be in the Palace of Westminster. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment (The Queen's Life Guard) will be in the Palace of Westminster. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment (The Queen's Life Guard) will be in the Palace of Westminster.

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr Alan Bamford, former Principal, Homerton College, Cambridge; 67; Mr Milton Berle, comedian; 89; Miss Chilli Boucher, actress; 88; Mr John Buller, former joint senior partner, Coopers & Lybrand; 64; Sir Alastair Burnet, broadcaster; 69; Mr Van Cliburn, pianist; 63; Mr Bill Cosby, comedian and actor; 64; Miss Annabel Croft, tennis player; 51; Lord Cuckney of Milbank, chairman, Orion Publishing Group; 72; Mr Gareth Edwards, rugby player; 50; Sir Arthur Herring, former chairman, British Gas; 86; Don Philip Holdsworth, former Master, St Benet's Hall, Oxford; 76; Mr Thomas Lloyd Jones, retired surgeon; 97; Mr Michael Kenward, science writer; 52; Mr Michael Gough Matthews, former Director, Royal College of Music; 66; Lord Quirk, former President, British Academy; 77; Miss Jennifer Saunders, comedienne and actress; 39; Sir Harold Walker, former MP; 70; Mr Frank Windsor, actor; 70; TOMORROW: Mr David Blatherwick, ambassador to Egypt; 56; Professor Derek Brewer, former Master, Emmanuel College, Cambridge; 74; Sir Richard Buxton, High Court judge; 59; Mr Ian Campbell, civil engineer; 75; Mr James Craig, Arabic scholar and Vice-Chairman, Middle East Association; 72; Mr Moss Evans, former trade union leader; 72; Mr Harrison Ford, actor; 55; Mr Larry Gomes, West Indies cricketer; 44; Vice-Admiral the Hon Sir Nicholas Hill-Norton, former Deputy Chief of Defence Staff; 58; Mr Ian Hyslop, Editor, *Private Eye*; 37; Mr Peter Job, Chief executive, Reuters; 56; Sir Philip Jones, chairman, Total Oil Marine; 66; Mr

Kenneth Machin, a circuit judge and Chief Social Security Commissioner; 61; Vice-Admiral Sir Gerard Mansfield; 76; Mr Bryan Murray, actor; 48; Dr Gillespie Francis, Director, Kew Gardens; 50; Brigadier Dame Jean Rivett-Drake, former Director, WRAC; 88; Dr Patricia Rodgers, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, the Bahamas; 49; Mr Chris Sette, television presenter; 54; Miss Rachel Squire MP; 43; Mr Patrick Stewart, actor; 57; Mr David Storey, playwright; 64; Professor the Rev Dr Anthony Threlton, head of the Department of Theology, Nottingham University; 60; Professor Jeff Thompson, educationalist; 59; Sir Garfield Todd, former prime minister, Southern Rhodesia; 89; Professor Sir Bernard Tomlinson, pathologist; 77; Miss Simone Veil, MEP; 71.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Yal Bryner (Yol Bryner), actor, 1915. Deaths: Desiderius Erasmus, scholar, 1536. On this day: the Armada set sail from Spain, 1588. Today is the Feast Day of St Felix, Saints Hermagoras and Fortunatus, St Jason, St John Gualbert, St John Jones, St John the Iberian, St Veronica. TOMORROW: Births: John Clare, peasant poet, 1793. Deaths: Jean-Paul Marat, French revolutionary leader, murdered in his bath 1793. On this day: a "Live Aid" rock concert, organised by Bob Geldof, raised over £42m for African famine relief, 1985. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of Saints Bridget and Maurine. St Eusebius of Caesarea. St Francis Solano, St Henry the Emperor, St Mildred, St Silas or Silvanus.

How the Orange card was turned into a trump

The Troubles in Northern Ireland, it is often said, are not about religion. This last week you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. True, there has been the usual talk about tribalism and identity, triumphalism and discrimination. But the religious dimension was unavoidable. It was a church service which was the starting-point for the Orangemen's controversial progress down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown. It was an outdoor Mass held in full vestments before the armoured Land-rovers of the security forces which was perhaps the most striking nationalist response, touching raw folk memories of the days during the Protestant supremacy when many Catholics could only hear Mass said on a rock in the open air.

Cynics might say that yesterday's decision by four Orange lodges to re-route similar marches in Belfast, Newry, Armagh and Londonderry was prompted by the Byzantine calculation of partisan advantage which characterises the political process in the province. Perhaps they were warped by the RUC that there were quite simply not enough police in the province to prevent loss of life in the nationalist protests which were planned. But we should be more charitable.

History is about change. Yet those who profess themselves to be concerned with the spiritual often blind themselves to the fact when they talk of absolute values. Universal truths are expressed in different ways and apostolates in different eras. The problem is that many who hold themselves to be religious confuse the essence with the expression. The result is then cultural ossification rather than spiritual vitality.

This is, of course, not a peculiarly Protestant trait. Indeed it might more generally be held of Roman Catholics, who historically have demonstrated a tendency to ritualise and then attach meaning to the ritual which properly belongs to a truth which the ritual was meant to honour.

The most evident example of this is the Catholic traditionalist veneration of the Tridentine Latin Mass which was abolished by the reforming Second Vatican Council by which Catholicism

faith & treason

Those who claim to be religious often mistake the expression of their faith for its essence. No one can now say that of the Orange Order, argues Paul Valley.

values. Universal truths are expressed in different ways and apostolates in different eras. The problem is that many who hold themselves to be religious confuse the essence with the expression. The result is then cultural ossification rather than spiritual vitality. This is, of course, not a peculiarly Protestant trait. Indeed it might more generally be held of Roman Catholics, who historically have demonstrated a tendency to ritualise and then attach meaning to the ritual which properly belongs to a truth which the ritual was meant to honour.

The most evident example of this is the Catholic traditionalist veneration of the Tridentine Latin Mass which was abolished by the reforming Second Vatican Council by which Catholicism

sought to evangelise the modern world more effectively.

More widespread, if more covert, is the influence of reactionary groups like Opus Dei, which are attacked by the Pope's representative in England and Wales, Archbishop Luigi Bommarito, in an interview in the *Tablet* next week to mark the end of his 11 years as papal nuncio. He identifies such groups as Catholics "who clearly identify the Church with their own piety and the vision which nurtured them in an earlier period of history". His words might, until yesterday, have applied equally to the Orange Order.

Behind the expression of Orangism is an essential Protestantism which fosters and celebrates freedom of conscience, personal liberty, tolerance and self-determination. All this followed from the reformed faith's sola scriptura insistence on the primacy of revelation and of the right of each Christian to interpret that for him or herself.

It is a powerful legacy which has much to offer to the whole of Ireland. Once it was seen to speak across the political divide, the great 18th-century Irish nationalist leader Wolfe Tone was, after all, a Protestant. But it is now evident again in the preference for conciliation over confrontation in yesterday's decision. It was there in the dispersed authority by which the re-routing was the decision of autonomous individual Or-

ange lodges. It was there when the Leader of the Orange Order, Robert Saulters, turned up to support Catholic worshippers who were being picketed by angry loyalists each week as they entered their church in Ballymena.

The shifting demographic patterns of the province mean that traditionally routed church parades to celebrate that Protestant identity have become something else. The Orangemen's new recognition of that is a demonstration of moral courage. Their right to parade remains, but the decision not to exercise it on this occasion shows a willingness to look beyond the expression to the essence.

Now it is up to the Catholics to reciprocate. It is not enough for Gerry Adams to announce that the many nationalist mobilisations which were planned in response to the parades have now been cancelled.

Nor would it be enough to suggest that there will be no protest at the rest of the 2,000 parades which the Orange Order stages each July to mark the anniversary of the 1690 victory of Protestant King William over the deposed Catholic monarch, James II.

The Catholics of Northern Ireland too must now look to what distinguishes expression from essence. Only when they do in sufficient numbers will the IRA feel the need to announce an unequivocal ceasefire.

These Chinese professionals with international characteristics are vital to the future of Hong Kong and may help it to become a still more extraordinary place, says Jonathan Fenby



peer pressure
david
arionov

Hong Kong: a middle-class act

Now that Hong Kong has become part of the last major country ruled by a Communist party, maybe it is time for a touch of Marxist class analysis of the last great British colony. In these days of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, of leaders who seek to reach across old barriers to form a consensus, talk of social class may seem as outdated as old staggers taking tea on the Peak. But there is a sense in which the class structure says a lot about what Britain's last major colony may be in its first year as part of China. And the diagnosis could give pause for thought to any Marxists who, in these days of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, remain in Peking.

Hong Kong has a readily definable establishment upper class. Even if many of its members made their fortunes themselves, rather than inheriting them, some of the great firms are still British, grouped round the old colonial hongs - Jardine, Swire, and the mighty power of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, which has just been ranked by *Business Week* as the second most valuable bank in the world. But the great majority of them have, for some time now, been run by Chinese.

Most of the tycoons who dominate Hong Kong trace their origins back to the mainland, many having fled here after the Communists took power. One formidable group comes from Shanghai - three of the four contenders to run Hong Kong after 1 July were from the former Paris of the East. Others spring from the great diaspora of the overseas Chinese. Between them, they ran Hong Kong's great property and

trading groups, the shipping firms and the finance houses that channel international investment into the mainland. Since the handover, they have also run the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

The 6 million people of Hong Kong island, Kowloon and the New Territories also contain a definite lower class. This may be a rich place, with more wealth per head than Britain, but Hong Kong has its poor and disadvantaged. Income disparities have been growing. The criminal courts tell a litany of distress - violence set off by poverty, incest, child abuse and vicious loan-sharking. Triads flourish, and housing has been a problem for as long as anybody can remember.

The decline of manufacturing, which has been exported across the border to China, has left tens of thousands of people without work in a society where welfare is minimal. If beggars are rare, Hong Kong has its "cagemen" living in tiny spaces; they were much visited by the international media as a sideshow to the handover story. A member of the Hong Kong Council of Social Services reckons that some 640,000 people - about 10 per cent of the population - live in "abject poverty", without money for decent food and housing.

The new Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, definitely belongs to the establishment. He inherited a shipping empire from his father that had included the *Queen Elizabeth* before it went down in Hong Kong harbour. When the empire ran into trouble a decade ago, it was bailed out with funding from China organised by another

kingpin of the establishment, Henry Fok. And when he emerged as the front-runner to become Chief Executive, there were reports that Mr Tung's appointment was opposed by leftists at China's *de facto* legation here because of his links with top tycoons.

Once in office, Mr Tung quickly sketched out an across-the-class-barrier programme that promises to improve education and housing and to look after the elderly. He also seems to be ready to consider providing the kind of government help for industry that the colonial regime always shied away from - a course urged on him by some leading voices in the business community. It could all end up with a familiar paternalistic pattern, in which the establishment looks after itself and keeps the masses quiet with better living conditions. The lord in his office tower; the people quiescent down below.

Now comes the interesting part of the picture - the one that may prove to be the key legacy from the last years of British colonialism: the men and women in the middle.

The emergence of an east-Asian middle class could be one of the most significant of the next decade. It is already a fact of life in Japan and Singapore, and is well under way elsewhere. Drive through some Malaysian towns, past the neat houses with their Proton cars in the driveway, and you could be in a steaming equivalent of Rustbelt. The economist and writer Jim Rowher, in his book *Asia Rising*, estimates that during the first decade of the new millennium, there will be a consumer class of around 1 billion people in the belt running through South Korea, Japan, coastal China and south-east Asia. Its people will not be as rich as their equivalents in the West, but they will make up the biggest middle class in history.

Nowhere is this middle class more evident

than in Hong Kong, and nowhere has it felt such a tide flowing in its direction. The drive for self-improvement has always been huge here: businessmen who have made fortunes from nothing rival film stars and canto-pop singers as popular idols. But what has happened in the Nineties is that a strong and expanding middle class has positioned itself between the rich establishment and the masses, who are no longer needed to man garment sweat-shops. Most are in business or the civil service, but many others fill the professions where, increasingly, Cantonese have been taking the place of the British FILTH (Failed In London, Try Hong Kong).

They are bright and active - and they know the value of freedom. They provide the spokespersons for democracy you saw on your television screens during the handover. Some were pressing for the extension of democracy well before Chris Patten headed this way in 1992. They made the most of what he offered them; but now that he is gone and the elected legislature has been dissolved, the next elections will be held on a playing field tilted against them.

Some have put their heads down, concentrating on making money, and seeing no contradiction between political freedom and their freedom to move ahead. Given what has happened in Hong Kong, that is entirely understandable: it is presumptuous to ask people to stand still when there are so many stick their necks out when there are so many uncertainties in the air. Getting on with business behind sheltering walls has been a Chinese tradition ever since the days when you made sure you kept your wealth well concealed from the imperial tax-collector.

But there can be little doubt of the link between political democracy and the wider freedoms that the middle class has always used to exert its influence in growing societies. If that

link is continued out of the last years of colonialism, a vital element in the future of Hong Kong will have been forged. Without it, the Special Administrative Region will take at least one step backwards; with it, Hong Kong has at least one more chance of becoming an even more extraordinary place in the years ahead.

The articulateness and attractiveness to the international media of the democratic middle class will be one card in its favour; more significant is the central role its members play in making Hong Kong work. The establishment may be promoting the virtues of Chinese values, but it should know the importance of these Chinese professionals with international characteristics in ensuring that Hong Kong maintains the qualities that have made it such a success.

In time, this would mean a tussle for power between the class that has presided over the establishment of the Special Administrative Region and the rising sector of society as it aspires for greater influence and a bigger slice of the cake - just as the British middle class did in the last century. Some democratic politicians are already positioning themselves for such a future.

The key relationship for Hong Kong will be with Peking; but beneath that another dynamic will be at play. This will determine whether Hong Kong will become just another Chinese city or whether it will remain the stage for a social, economic, political and professional interplay of life, a much firmer footing than anybody would have thought possible when the People's Liberation Army moved into its new bases on 1 July and the elected legislators were relegated to the gallery.

The writer is editor of the *South China Morning Post*.

Join the party: young Hong Kong Chinese celebrating the colony's handover in Kowloon. Photograph: David Rose

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

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IN THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY REVIEW

karen krizanovich

The oracle at Delphi says, "Know thyself." I say, "If I did, I'd run away." I'm running now. A really sickening self-discovery: I need to be liked. This sad posture puts me into the Pantheon of Pathos, along with actors, politicians and others who don't understand that desperation is not sexy and neediness is not a turn-on. Think of Sally Field blurring out her Oscar acceptance speech. "You like me, you really like me!" in a pitch only dogs can hear. Listen to Barbra Streisand belting out, "People, people who need people... are the luckiest people in the world."

No they're not. They're pathetic. I know because I am one. The nauseating drive to be liked is embedded in us Yanks at an early age. At school, popularity was more valuable than learning something. Being a cheerleader was praiseworthy in a way that earning great marks in trigonometry was not.

Popularity, a vital element in America's dumbing-down process, is alien to most Brits. They prefer to acquire a "reputation", more solid and long-lasting than the floppy, please-scratch-my-tummy helplessness of "likeability".

I used to look in the mirror and say with the confidence of someone who has read too many self-help books, "People like you. Children and animals like you. Work on those traffic wardens, kid, and you've got it made..."

It's all hogwash. The scales began to fall from my eyes when my boyfriend

agreed to baby-sit his ex-dog. I've always been liked by other species. You're a good person if animals like you: they still have fully functioning rotten-person detectors intact. This Stalag 13-styled canine, however, ignored me completely. Not even a salutary sniff. Hurt and insulted, I ached for him to do something wrong. You can't smack a dog for impudence - not one that resembles a pony with fangs.

Jealousy plays a part here, of course. Going out for a walk with the boyfriend and his furry moose is like trying to squeeze between Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman in *Rain Man*. The dog's so autistic that I could wear a meat helmet and still go unnoticed.

Finally, I decide to sprint away from man and hound in hopes that one of them will at least chase me a little - anything for attention. Running as quickly as I can, I am delighted when his big doggy paws claw at the back of my shoes. I trip. I fall. Relief at missing a metal bolt is soon replaced by a mild state of shock. Along with two bashed knees, two bruised shoulders, an unhappy chin, temporary blindness in one eye and smashed fingers in my right hand, I'm OK. Really. The dog likes me. He really likes me.

To buck myself up and rebuild my vanity, I decide to call a new acquaintance, the artist Adrian George. Adrian, who is based in London and Paris, is one of this generation's best artists, with works in the V&A and the National Por-

trait Gallery. Flooded with commissions and with a new show in the works, I blanch at the thought of troubling him. But I think we're on good terms. When he answers the doorbell at his atelier, I always ask, "Is this Britain's most famous living artist?" He never answers; he just buzzes me in.

Having been a guest at his flat in Paris and spending some considerable time with the man, I reckon I'm in a good position to ask for a favour. Lusting after his drawings especially, I fancy a portrait of myself. I know I should ask him for a quick sketch of my boyfriend and that dog but, still limping from the canine crash, I don't feel generous. Nothing would please me more than to hang a bunch of Adrian George pencil-strokes that look like me on my wall.

At 53, George has a youthful, playful air about him. This gives me hope that he'll take pity and draw me as flatteringly as possible. I know from mutual friends that he often draws people he likes. He has sketched the likes of Paul Bowles, William Golding and Arthur C. Clarke, and I know how women often commission him to draw them in the nude. George once told me that a lot of women feel that being drawn in the raw is romantic.

"To be observed but not touched, to have a kind of unwavering attention focused on them for several hours at a time, where else can they find that?"

That's exactly what I need. Unwavering attention. Vanity, thy name is Karen.

Dialling his number, I'm rather excited. This could salvage my otherwise miserable week and it would be nice to yammer with his girlfriend and son, too, while I'm there. The phone rings a few times and I hear the teasing, gravelly voice of Adrian at the other end.

"Yes?"

"Adrian? It's Karen Krizanovich here. How are you? I was wondering if you had the time to, er, draw me some time this week. Not in the nude, I don't think - it's a bit breezy. I know it's a lot to ask but..." I'm stammering.

"No," he says, and puts the phone down. No goodbye, nothing.

Stunned, I quickly dial a few friends who know him. "Well," says one, "he's moody. Artistic temperament and all that." Another tries to quell the rejection by saying, "He's a harsh judge sometimes." One doesn't spare me an inch: "He's whose-proof, my dear?" (What the heck does that mean?) Yet another mutual friend returns my call and adds, "The man only draws people he likes. He turns down commissions when he doesn't mesh with his subject."

Finally, an American friend sheds some light on George's rude reaction. "Did you commission him?"

"No."

"Try offering money next time," the American suggests. "Found stealing is more valuable than popularity. We're not in Kansas any more."

Well, you can go to Oz. You and your little dog too.

I'm so

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEAR

BT urged to renegotiate \$20bn merger

Michael Harrison

British Telecom was under mounting pressure last night to renegotiate its \$20bn (£11.8bn) takeover of MCI or pull out of the deal altogether after the shock profits warning from the long-distance US telephone operator.

As the City digested the scale of MCI's problems, the BT share price plummeted by nearly 5 per cent wiping £2.35bn from its market value and prompting BT's chief executive Sir Peter Bonfield to embark on a series of emergency briefings with institutional shareholders.

Sir Peter said that although he was "surprised and a bit disappointed" at the suddenness of MCI's profits warning, it was premature to say whether BT would now insist on renegotiating the terms of the merger.

However, there was little doubt in the City that the news had dealt a severe blow to BT's credibility and the prospects for Concert, the £36bn group that will be created through the takeover of MCI.

A number of institutions said the deal would have to be renegotiated at least while James Dodd, telecoms analyst with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and a long-standing critic of the merger said BT should scrap the takeover altogether and use the money to fund a share buyback.

If BT pulls out it would face a penalty payment of \$150m-£80m under a poison pill clause in the agreement. But Mr Dodd said: "BT should pull out. Spending \$150m to save \$20bn is the best investment it could make."

MCI warned on Thursday night that losses this year on its move into the local US telephone market were likely to reach \$800m - double the level previously forecast - and could be even higher in 1998, the year in which it had been budgeting break-even. MCI's attempt to conquer the domestic market in competition with the regional Bell operating companies, is likely to result in losses being \$1.2bn more than expected.

A number of large shareholders were asking that BT and MCI could have been un-

aware of the scale of the losses after working on the Concert deal for nearly a year and just two months before they expect to get final approval for the merger from US regulators.

"The terms of the merger have to be renegotiated now, this is such a significant event that the two companies have got to sit down and talk about what an appropriate value is because that value has clearly changed," said one institutional investor.

"It looks like all the earnings growth potential of Concert has disappeared for the next two to three years. That is a long time to expect shareholders to put up with earnings dilution of that type."

There was also undisguised anger that investors were not put in the picture at the time when BT and MCI were getting shareholder approvals for the merger. "We are very disappointed," said one institution. "You would have thought the due diligence would have pulled some of this into the open and that BT could have shared it with investors at the time they were voting the



Happier times: Sir Peter Bonfield of BT (right) and Gerald Taylor, chief executive of MCI, at the merger announcement

deal through. MCI's move into local telephony is the major growth strategy for Concert over the next few years and yet no-one seems to have spotted the problems. What on earth has been going on?"

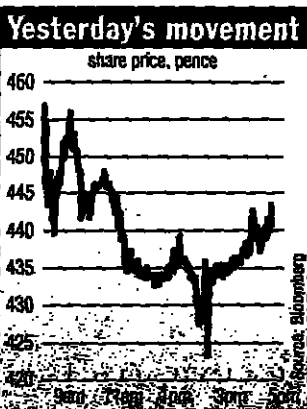
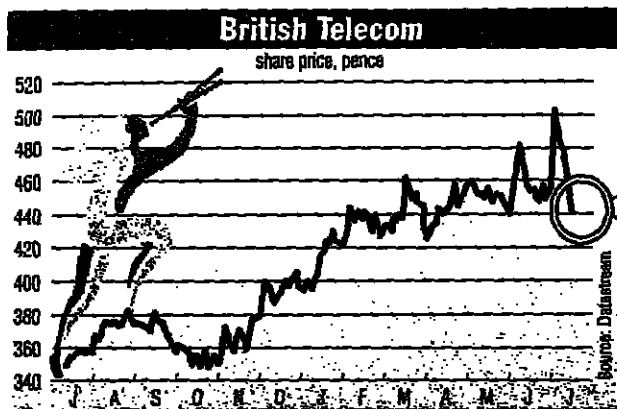
Sir Peter said BT had only become aware of the increased losses on Wednesday night when he attended an MCI board meeting in the US along with two other BT directors, Sir Colin Marshall and Keith Oates.

At that meeting a collective decision was taken by the MCI board to press ahead with its domestic strategy despite the increased investment and losses it would entail. Sir Peter then reported back to a meeting of the

BT board on Thursday. The BT board, however, refused to endorse the strategy decided by the MCI board and is now assessing whether so much extra money should be committed or whether there is a better way of helping MCI attack the domestic market, using BT's experience.

BT has cancelled leave for a number of senior executives and sent a specialist team to the US to analyse MCI's figures. "There is going to be a lot of very tough talking and a lot of eyeballing," said one observer. BT and MCI blamed the higher losses on anti-competitive practices by the local Bells which had slowed up MCI's entry into the local market and forced it to increase spending on capital equipment, marketing and customer support.

Comment, page 21



Tax credits blow will cost £200m

The abolition of dividend tax credits in the Budget will cost BT £150m to £200m a year in pre-tax profits for forcing it to pay more money into the company pension fund, it emerged yesterday, writes Michael Harrison.

This is one of the biggest hits that any UK corporation will face as a side effect of the Chancellor's decision to scrap tax credits for gross funds such as pension funds.

The BT pension fund, which has assets of £200m and nearly 370,000 members, had a £600m surplus at the end of 1996 based on the last actuarial valuation.

Robert Brace, BT's finance director, said yes-

terday that as a result of a new valuation now being carried out by its actuaries Watson Wyatt, the fund was likely to slip into deficit.

This would result in a higher charge against BT's profit and loss account in the current financial year and beyond and also increased cash payments into the pension fund over time.

Of the fund's 370,000 members, 119,000 are contributing. At present the company puts in 9.5 per cent of gross earnings while employees contribute 6 per cent. But under the terms of the scheme, members' contributions do not change, meaning that BT has to make good any shortfall.

Names of Hambro staff facing action revealed

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

The names of Hambros employees facing possible disciplinary action in the wake of the failed bid for the Co-op emerged yesterday. It can also be revealed that the three corporate financiers sacked this week by the bank lost their jobs without being shown the report that condemned them.

Nigel Pantling, Peter Large and Andrew Salmon were allowed to defend themselves against individual criticisms but

were not shown the findings of the final report into Hambros's role in advising Andrew Regan on his aborted £1.2bn bid for the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

The secret report, which Hambros said on Thursday it was unable to publish for legal reasons, has also been kept from the senior corporate finance and banking staff who kept their jobs but face possible disciplinary action by the bank.

The members of the Hambros corporate finance and banking teams who face possible internal disciplinary action

emerged yesterday. Working in corporate finance with Peter Large and Andrew Salmon, both of whom were directors, was assistant director Geoff Austin. They were supported on the bid by Gerry Lynch, a director of Hambros banking division, and Alan Archer, assistant director.

Also involved in advising Andrew Regan and his takeover vehicle Galileo was Roger Barnes, a director of Hambros and a former head of supervision at the Bank of England. He is understood to have made represen-

tations to the Bank of England over the possible sale to Allied Irish Bank of the Co-operative Bank in the event of the bid for the CWS being successful.

Other names of key professionals advising Galileo to leave Hambros yesterday included Kevin Dunn and Margaret Moore, both partners at lawyers Smith Brainhow, the firm of solicitors. They worked with Nigel Campion Smith, the partner at the firm who resigned last Monday to reduce the "embarrassment" the affair had caused it.

Travers Smith's managing partner Alastair Douglas refused to say whether further resignations would follow the departure of Mr Campion Smith nor whether he was giving effect to the findings of the Norton Rose report.

The report from the Norton Rose law firm has been seen only by the directors of Hambros, the bank's publicly quoted holding company, fueling suspicions that it is highly critical of senior staff. Its contents, shrouded in secrecy thanks to the terms of the Banking Act un-

der which it was conducted, have been passed on to the Bank of England and the Securities and Futures Authority.

The two regulators are expected to focus on the flow of information from these teams of advisers to senior staff at Hambros Bank, including its chairman Sir Chips Keswick who takes over shortly from Lord Hambro as chairman of the bank's publicly quoted holding company.

The fact that Hambros is unable for legal reasons to publish the Norton Rose report leaves unclear the extent to

which more senior executives than Mr Pantling were involved. Senior bankers said yesterday, however, that in problem cases such as the CWS affair it would be extremely unlikely that decisions would be taken solely within a bank's corporate finance division.

The CWS affair has caused Hambros enormous reputational damage, according to rivals. Although existing clients are understood to have stood by the bank, it is thought to be struggling to attract new clients in the wake of the affair.

Robin Marshall, chief economist at Chase, said: "The trouble with the Bank of England moving interest rates in short steps is that it leaves everyone looking forward to the next one. The tactics are wrong."

Figures due next week could fuel the currency market's love affair with sterling if, as expected, they continue to paint a picture of a very buoyant economy.

Brownyn Curtis, chief economist at Nomura, said the parallels with the late 1980s - the last time the pound stayed above DM3 for any length of time - were striking.

"It is nonsense to say the pound can go up for ever, but it could stay high until either the trade gap starts getting wider or it looks as though interest rates are at their peak," she said.

Market Report, page 22

SFA investigates share price swings in Display IT

John Willcock

The Securities and Futures Authority is looking at violent swings in the share price of Display IT, an on-line information company traded on OFEX, which plummeted 75p yesterday to 1.45p. The shares stood at 81p earlier this year.

The share price fell yesterday came just 48 hours after College Hill resigned as public relations advisers to Display IT. Alex Sandberg, head of College Hill, said yesterday that the decision had been taken because the company had refused to reveal who owned Absissa, a Luxembourg-based associate of Display IT.

"We asked Display IT for the information and we didn't get it. In the absence of that information, we were unable to act for them," said Mr Sandberg.

Display IT was launched by Pe-

ter Levin and four other directors to provide clients with existing on-line information from the likes of Reuters and other providers by accessing it over the Internet, at a fraction of the cost.

Yesterday the company issued a statement on the OFEX bulletin board saying that it expected to report its audited interim results for the period to 30 June 1997 "on or about 15 August."

It said its results are currently being audited by Deloitte & Touche. A spokesman for the SFA said yesterday: "We have been looking at movements in the price of Display IT stock. We have been talking to some participants in the market, including brokers. We wouldn't like to suggest at this stage whether [we have launched] any formal investigation. We are at a very preliminary stage, we're deciding what's necessary."

When asked whether the SFA

thought there had been a "concerted bear raid" on Display IT, the spokesman said: "We have to hold judgement until we get the information we need to make an assessment."

"If there has been market manipulation - and I'm not suggesting that that is the case - then the SIB might be the ones to look into this."

Barry Hocken, a member of JP Jenkins, the broker that runs OFEX, said that Display IT's share price had plummeted because "it would appear to be a concerted bear raid by 'Evel Knievel', who writes a column in one of the Sunday newspapers - he has been destroying the share price."

This was a reference to Simon Caudwell, a well known share trader, who confirmed yesterday that he had a short position in Display IT shares.

Further snub for LVMH chief in takeover fight

Andrew Yates

Drinks groups Grand Metropolitan and Guinness yesterday announced a large shake-up of their senior management teams in the wake of their proposed £24bn merger.

The move is an apparent snub to Bernard Arnault, the head of the French luxury goods group, LVMH, who is due to send a letter to GrandMet and Guinness in the middle of next week outlining alternative proposals to merge the spirits divisions of all three companies to form an independent quoted group.

There is speculation in the stock market that Mr Arnault is considering putting a compromise proposal to GrandMet and Guinness which would involve splitting its Moët Hennessy champagne and fine wines businesses into two sep-

arate operations. It is understood that LVMH would then propose to buy back Guinness's 34 per cent stake in Moët, while Guinness would purchase the outstanding 66 per cent of Hennessy it does not already own giving it full control of the brandy business and leaving LVMH with the champagne.

Guinness and GrandMet showed they were confident a merger would go ahead and be cleared by competition authorities around the world by appointing 32 senior executive appointments to the new group, GMG Brands. But both sides refused to say who or how many top executives would have to leave the group. Analysts believe as many as 30 top management jobs could be at risk.

Gerald Corbett, GrandMet's finance director, is the highest profile departure announced so far.

Beckett lifts bar to GEC bid for Siemens Defence

Michael Harrison

GEC's hopes of spearheading the consolidation of the European defence electronics industry were further bolstered yesterday after the Government released the group from undertakings that prevented it from buying Siemens Defence.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said she had taken the decision on the advice of the director-general of Fair Trading in light of the changing circumstances in the defence industry.

Analysis interrupted the move as not only GEC to bid for Siemens Defence, which consists mainly of the former Plessey radar and military communications businesses, but also as a sign the Government might be more relaxed about defence mergers involving UK firms.

On Thursday GEC announced a deal to merge part of its Marconi defence electronics division with those of Finmeccanica, the Italian state-controlled holding company. The deal came two days after GEC's new managing director George Simpson unveiled a strategic overhaul to catapult Marconi into the ranks of world defence contractors through a combination of mergers and takeovers.

GEC is one of four bidders interested in buying Siemens Defence. The other three are British Aerospace, Thomson-CSF of France and Alcatel Alsthom, which is also French.

Siemens Defence was created out of the break-up bid for Plessey by GEC and Siemens in 1989. At the time, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission voiced concerns about the impact of the deal on competition for defence radar and military communications orders and recommended GEC could not be allowed a stake in or control over the Plessey divisions.

Mrs Beckett said that it was no longer appropriate to maintain the restrictions although she stressed her decision should not be seen as prejudging any views the UK or European competition authorities might take.

STOCK MARKETS				
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High
FTSE 100	4767.80	+5.40	+0.1	4831.70
FTSE 250	4386.20	-9.30	-0.2	4729.40
FTSE 350	2987.20	+1.20	+0.1	2930.90
FTSE SmallCap	2204.82	-8.15	-0.4	2374.20
FTSE All-Share	2237.18	+0.54	+0.0	2269.36
New York	7886.75	+44.33	+0.6	7982.31
Tokyo	19754.78	+57.61	+0.3	20681.07
Hong Kong	14839.23	+135.50	+0.9	15196.79
Frankfurt	3982.88	-83.48	-1.6	4055.86

INTEREST RATES				
Short sterling*	UK medium gilt*	DS long bond	Bond Yields*	
3 Month	1 Year	10 Year	Govt	Corp
UK 6.78	7.44	7.08	7.85	7.11
US 5.86	6.91	6.27	6.94	6.58
Japan 0.56	0.78	2.29	3.31	-
Germany 2.97	3.18	3.58	6.53	6.39

CURRENCIES				
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	Pound	Dollar
Yesterday	Yesterday	Yesterday	Change	Change
\$ (London) 1.6872	0.5826	152.17	+0.22	-0.07
¥ (London) 1.6886	0.5822	152.17	+0.70	-0.04
DM (London) 2.9556	1.4201	152.17	-1.42	-0.07
¥ (London) 150.882	1.4201	152.17	+0.82	-0.07
£ Index	103.8	86.5	-0.3	-0.1

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JEREMY WARNER

'How it was that BT's own due diligence and researches failed to reveal these things is one issue. It certainly beggars belief that the first BT directors knew about all this when they attended an MCI board meeting last Wednesday'

Should BT now trash the MCI acquisition?

When things go wrong for a company, they tend to do so in spades. Already hit by the windfall profit tax and the abolition of tax credits on dividends, BT now finds itself in dire straits over its yet to be consummated merger with MCI of the US. Sir Peter Bonfield, and his chief executive, Sir Peter Bonfield, will find it mighty hard to extricate themselves from this one without loss of value, as the precipitous fall in BT's share price already bluntly predicts.

The bottom line is that MCI's already high-risk plunge into the newly deregulated local US telecoms market is going to cost at least \$1.2bn more over the next two years than everyone thought, this at a time when growth in MCI's core revenue earning long distance market is beginning to taper off with a speed nobody anticipated when the terms of this deal were struck.

How it was that BT's own due diligence and researches failed to reveal these things is one issue. It certainly beggars belief that the first BT directors knew about all this when they attended an MCI board meeting last Wednesday. You might have thought they would have had their ears rather closer to the ground than that. The more important immediate question, however, is what they are going to do about it.

MCI seems already to have made up its mind to proceed with the extra investment, and for the time being BT is powerless to

halt the process, even if it takes the view that the big push into local telecommunications has become uneconomic. BT would in any case be hard pressed to oppose MCI's plans, since they are so much a part of MCI's strategy for the future and formed such a key part of BT's sales pitch to the City.

This was a deal launched by BT on a gale of optimism and bravado, which I have to confess, I fully fell for at the time. The mind-set of management in circumstances like these is to push ahead at all costs, even though the short to medium-term impact on their share price might be highly damaging. Powerful egos and ambitions depend on this deal going ahead. All the same, there is no longer any question of this happening, as one seasoned institutional investor remarked yesterday, without a considerable downward renegotiation of the price.

The trouble is, MCI may not be prepared to play ball, and even if it is, it is no longer clear that MCI is the right acquisition for BT. Certainly a thorough process of re-evaluation is needed before proceeding any further. To go ahead after a warning like this one requires the most fundamental and searching of reappraisals. In a sense BT is lucky that US regulators have taken so long to approve the deal, because at least it now gets that chance.

Putting out entirely, something which Sir Peter says has not yet even remotely crossed his mind, itself carries a considerable cost.

MCI insisted when it signed the deal on one of those "heads we win, tails you lose" clauses beloved of Wall Street corporate financiers. In BT's case, it means paying MCI up to \$450m in compensation should it wish to trash the deal.

The question BT's non executive directors must now address is whether this might none the less prove the cheaper option. There is a small, though quite vocal, minority in the City which has long taken the view that the MCI acquisition never did amount to anything more than an earnings-dilutive pig in a poke. How does buying into the increasingly competitive US domestic market further BT's aim of becoming a global business telecommunications service provider, it is asked. The money could be better spent on smaller bolt-on acquisitions in the business telecoms market, and on buy-backs and enhanced dividends. That view, though still not one I would wholly go along with, will have been much strengthened by yesterday's revelations.

It would be wrong to talk in terms of insurrection yet, but certainly the City is falling out of love with the new Government quite markedly at the moment. At City lunch tables, the talk is of "unravelling", a Budget that was bad for business and bad for the City, and of the Chancellor going a step too far in his reforming zeal.

Actually this new mood of hostility probably has more to do with the City reverting to its traditional, true blue, political colours than anything else. After a period when nobody really knew what to think about Labour's landslide victory, City people are beginning to find their tongues once more, and since, for a change, not everything seems to be going the Government's way right now, they are becoming increasingly bold about it. I kid you not, for many, the final straw was the Prime Minister saying he was going to vote against fox hunting.

It takes quite a leap to get from fox hunting and the problems of Northern Ireland to the Chancellor's handling of the economy, but that hasn't stopped some people making it. The Chancellor didn't do enough in the Budget to cool the consumer boom, is the general criticism. Furthermore, the abolition of tax credits on dividends was an ill thought out piece of vindictiveness, the argument goes, whose effect will be to impose a hidden tax on business and clobber the City.

On the latter point, the City is probably right. But the more general observation that the Chancellor is failing the economy is not really supported by the evidence.

It is important here to ignore what the City is saying, which often amounts to little more than self-interested waffle, and look instead at what it is actually doing. Since Labour came to power, the FTSE 100 share

index has gone up more than 10 per cent, and despite three rises in short-term interest rates, long gilt yields have gone down. That in itself is quite a vote of confidence in what Gordon Brown is doing.

But the most powerful evidence of improved international confidence in the British economy, and in Labour's ability to manage it, is the strength of sterling, which touched three German marks to the pound yesterday for the first time since the autumn of 1990. Admittedly, this has quite a lot to do with the fact that Britain is ahead of Germany in the business cycle. As a consequence, its interest rates are going up sharply at a time when Germany's are stuck at a near recessionary low point. The changing fortunes of European monetary union accentuate the position by making the pound an attractive hedge against a weak euro.

There's plainly more to it than that, however. International investors would not be piling into the pound unless they believed Britain's relative economic position had changed. So although Gordon Brown's first Budget was arguably a bad one for business in the sense that it disproportionately hit the corporate sector, the judgement of markets is that the broad fiscal and monetary framework being established by Labour is rather more healthy than what went before. It seems that the City backlash against the new Chancellor is rather more apparent than real. Tally ho!

JCI to step up pressure on Lonrho

Andrew Yates

JCI, the first black-controlled African mining house, is poised to intensify the pressure on Lonrho to force the UK mining group into a merger.

JCI, despite already having had its merger aspirations rebuffed, is still pushing ahead with plans to buy a 27 per cent stake in Lonrho from Anglo American, the South African mining giant.

Lonrho, valued at almost £1bn on the stock market, is believed to be in talks with Anglo Vaal, another African miner. But JCI is intent on using its shareholding to block that and any other future mergers. It also

wants at least one seat on Lonrho's board.

Mzi Khumalo, JCI's chairman, is determined to broker a merger and is unwilling to sell the stake in Lonrho at any price.

"The stake in Lonrho gives us a seat at the negotiating table. It makes sure that whatever they want to do they will have to come to us first," Mr Khumalo said yesterday.

JCI is understood to want to push Lonrho to speed up its plans to demerge its African trading businesses and sell its Princess luxury hotel chain. When these businesses are gone, and Lonrho is left as a pure mining group, then JCI

believes it can convince Lonrho's shareholders that there would be a clear rationale for a merger.

JCI wants to marry the two groups' coal mining operations to create one of the largest coal businesses in the world. It is also keen to get hold of Lonrho's platinum assets, which would create a diversified mining group, more insulated from the plunging gold price. The combined group would be listed in London as well as South Africa and so would have greater access to new capital.

The European Commission is investigating JCI's acquisition of Lonrho's shares from Anglo. It is concerned that Anglo still pulls the strings at JCI, having sold the group to Mr Khumalo just last year. Some analysts believe Anglo is desperate to get hold of Lonrho's platinum interests by the back door. But Anglo is understood to be willing to sell its 13 per cent shareholding in JCI and end its involvement with the group, to push the share sale through.

Another potential stumbling block is mining rival Gencor's pre-emptive rights over Lonrho's platinum interests, which could be invoked should a merger take place.

But the European Commission is unlikely to allow Gencon to buy Lonrho's stake over fears it would have a virtual monopoly of the world's platinum market. And industry sources suggest Gencon has privately given up any hope of owning Lonrho's platinum stake and will not exercise its pre-emption rights.

Mr Khumalo met Lonrho's management team on Thursday to discuss his proposals. But Lonrho refused to comment

yesterday on whether it would reconsider a merger. "You have got to remember that JCI does not actually own anything yet and the European Commission is still looking into the acquisition of its stake from Anglo," a Lonrho spokesman said yesterday.

Mr Khumalo is one of South Africa's fast-rising black business businessmen. A friend of Nelson Mandela, he spent 12 years as a political prisoner on South Africa's Robben Island. On his release he quickly rose to prominence in the black business world, spearheading last November's £380m acquisition of a 34.9 per cent stake in JCI from Anglo American.

IN BRIEF

Courtaulds and J Matthey opt for FIDs

Courtaulds and Johnson Matthey announced they would be paying final dividends as a foreign income dividend, following proposals in the Budget to abolish FIDs in 1999. Courtaulds, the chemicals group, said that paying the FID would save £1.2m, reducing its Advanced Corporation Tax surplus to £30m. Johnson Matthey, the engineer, said it would save £5.8m and utilise some of the £31m unrelieved ACT paid in recent years. Courtaulds, which will pay a net FID of 11.95p, said that as a result of the Budget, paying a FID "would both give the company a cash flow benefit and, in the longer term, reduce the company's exposure to the risk that surplus ACT may not be recovered".

Smith & Nephew dampens bid rumours

Chris O'Donnell, newly installed chief executive of Smith & Nephew, was forced to dampen speculation that the healthcare company was to buy a business from Roche valued at £2.4bn (£1.4bn). Mr O'Donnell has privately said over the last few weeks that it had expressed an interest in buying DePuy, the US artificial limb maker, 84 per cent owned by the Swiss group. "We said that we have approached Roche and if DePuy became available we would be delighted to look at it. But there are no active talks. Roche has given us no response," said Mr O'Donnell. Analysts said Mr O'Donnell was naive to discuss the group's intentions.

Burton stores groups chief resigns

The plan to restructure and rename the Burton businesses and shift off Debenhams the flagship store with its own board has claimed its first executive victim. Stuart Rose, a director of the group and chief executive of the individual store groups, Burton Menswear, Dorothy Perkins, Evans, and Principles, resigned after the board meeting on Thursday night which confirmed the restructuring plan. He is expected to get a £600,000 pay-off. He left after being offered and turning down a post in the company which will take over the remaining businesses once Debenhams has been floated.

Merrydown to cut two directors

Merrydown, the cider and alcopops maker, is set to remove at least two of its seven directors from the board in the wake of a near 60 per cent slump in pre-tax profits to £821,260 for the year to March. Sales of Two Dogs, the alcoholic lemonade, plummeted last year as dozens of rival alcopops exploded on to the market. Richard Purdy, chairman, said: "We have not had a good year. We have overspent and under achieved. We have to cut down on cost. Two directors will probably go." Mr Purdy, who has been with Merrydown for 32 years and was appointed its chairman in 1991, declined to say whether he would be leaving the group.

Robertson welcomes Eurofighter decision

George Robertson, Defence Secretary, welcomed the German government's decision yesterday to approve funding for production of the Eurofighter. After speaking to his German counterpart, Volker Ruehe, Mr Robertson said the decision now provides a "solid basis for planning for the production phase to proceed". He added that the Eurofighter is the "best option at the best price" to meet the UK's defence needs. "Eurofighter is also essential to the future of the European aerospace industry and will sustain thousands of highly-skilled jobs in Europe," he said.

Northern Rock prepares for flotation

Northern Rock Building Society is mailing 900,000 members entitled to free shares from its forthcoming flotation, with details of the last date, 22 August, on which they must have minimum cash levels in their accounts to qualify for the 500 free shares minimum. Flotation is expected to take place on 1 October.

ICI sets price on Australian sale

The offer price of ICI's 62.7 per cent holding in ICI Australia has been set at A\$12.35 a share for international investors and A\$11.95 a share for Australian retail investors. The sale will raise an exceptional profit after tax of £475m for ICI, which will be accounted for in the parent company's third-quarter profits.

Doubt over Germany's claims on deficit

Sameena Ahmad

Theo Waigel, Germany's Finance Minister, yesterday outlined figures for the state budget deficit of 2.25 per cent of GDP, well below the 3 per cent target specified under the Maastricht Treaty. However, *The Independent's* panel of experts said that including the social security and regional deficits, Germany would overshoot that target.

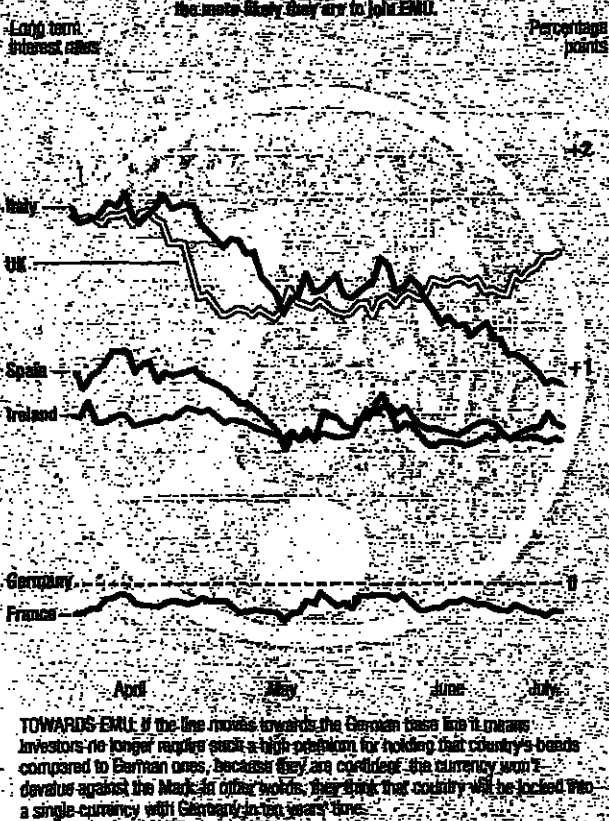
Many saw extensive selling of oil reserves by Germany yesterday, and of shares in the telecom privatisation, as an indication of Chancellor Kohl's determination or desperation. Eric Fishwick of Nikko Europe said: "We are sceptical that Germany can get within splitting distance of the targets, but the political will is there."

Robert Lind of ABN Amro said Mr Waigel's confirmation yesterday that Germany would overshoot this year's budget by DM18bn, implied an overall deficit of 3.4 per cent. However, the Bundesbank was arguing for a change to the criteria to emphasise not absolute numbers but sustained economic stability. "Germany sees that Italy will make it and this is an argument to keep them out. It's all a very tricky game."

Martin Brookes at Goldman Sachs said: "Germany is facing big political problems. If union happens it will be because politicians have won the arguments, not because the economics are right."

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The chart shows the probability of each country joining the EMU by the end of 1998.



TOWARDS EMU. If the final round of the German case for EMU, analysts are looking for a peak in the probability of joining that country's banks compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the Mark and other banks. They think that country will be joined by a single currency with Germany in 1998.

AWAY FROM EMU. However, if the final round of the German case for EMU, analysts are looking for a peak in the probability of joining that country's banks compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the Mark and other banks. They think that country will be joined by a single currency with Germany in 1998.

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View

The independent asked analysts from:

Nikko Europe, Prime Waigel, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Stanley, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, Citicorp, UBS.

What probability they placed on EMU starting on time:

Probability EMU starts on time: 35% (84% last week)

Probability EMU is delayed: 31% (32% last week)

Probability EMU never happens: 34% (84% last week)

Budget adds to bill for pension mis-selling

Nic Clewitt
Personal Finance Editor

The Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the financial regulator, yesterday warned independent advisers that the cost of compensating pension mis-selling victims would have to rise in the wake of tax changes in the Budget.

The SIB said it would be publishing new tables on how to calculate redress to policyholders in the wake of the abolition of Advanced Corporation Tax (ACT) relief for pension funds.

The SIB's quarterly guidance on pension compensation takes into account a range of factors likely to affect the amount companies must set aside to meet anticipated bills.

Any guidance must take into

account a complicated set of factors, including changes in investment conditions, interest and inflation rates and anticipated returns on equities and gilts. Compensation offered by companies must be based on these SIB assumptions.

A SIB spokeswoman said: "We expect that where offers are calculated in respect of cases where top-ups are offered, because reinstatement is not available, it is impossible to say exactly what difference the ACT changes will make."

"For example, those who are in the urgent category of cases to be reviewed because they are close to retirement would be switching to gilts to protect their investments. They will not be substantially affected by the ACT changes."

However, independent ac-

tuaries believe the change could add hundreds of millions of pounds to the existing £4bn compensation bill.

They warned earlier this week that the abolition of ACT credits, announced on 2 July by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, would mean the returns that many insurers expected their pension funds to achieve would have to be scaled down, increasing the bill for most companies.

Fears have also been raised that the Chancellor's ACT statement will raise the stakes between insurers negotiating to reinstate policyholders into occupational pensions and the trustees of those schemes. Trustees are likely to demand higher reinstatement payments, potentially leading to more delays in the compensation process.

Christies' sales rise 15%

John Willcock

Christie's International, the British-based auction house and art specialist, said yesterday that its world-wide sales increased to £575m in the first six months of 1997, a rise of 15 per cent over the same period in 1996.

In dollar terms the rise was even higher at 23 per cent. Peter Blythe, Christie's finance director, said the fundamental reason for the sales growth was the rise in the number of wealthy people around the world.

"We've seen a few years of steady growth in the mature economies of the US and UK, while there has been a huge increase in demand from the Far East," Mr Blythe said.

There was also the exceptional success of the Loch Collection of Impressionist pictures which totalled £57.3m, he said. This New York auction saw Paul Cézanne's portrait of his wife, *Madame Cézanne au fureau jaune*, go for £14,260,802.

Sales growth had been steady since the low point of the recession in 1991, said Mr Blythe.

"The international art market tends to lag both on the way up and on the way down," he said. Christie's sold no less than 75 works of art for \$1m or more in the first half of this year, compared with 59 items in the same period last year.

Auctions through Hong Kong were doing particularly well from new wealthy entrepreneurs from countries like Indonesia and Korea, Mr Blythe said. Christie's shares closed down 2p to 293.5p.

Foreign Exchange Rates as at 10:00

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.6877	17.15	54.51
Canada	2.2193	71.68	208.20
Australia	2.8525	57.30	289.27
Germany	3.9504	340.320	930.590
France	3.9617	342.14	937.04
Italy	3.9617	342.14	937.04
Japan	160.33	35.31	108.10
Spain	166.08	104.100	307.302
Belgium	160.33	35.31	108.10
Netherlands	160.33	35.31	108.10
Denmark	160.33	35.31	108.10
Sweden	160.33	35.31	108.10
Norway	160.33	35.31	108.10
Finland	160.33	35.31	108.10
Ireland	160.33	35.31	108.10
Portugal	160.33	35.31	108.10
Austria	160.33	35.31	108.10
Switzerland	160.33	35.31	108.10
South Africa	160.33	35.31	108.10
India	160.33	35.31	108.10
China	160.33	35.31	108.10
Malaysia	160.33	35.31	108.10
New Zealand	160.33	35.31	108.10
Saudi Arabia	160.33	35.31	108.10
Singapore	160.33	35.31	108.10

Other Spot Rates as at 10:00

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1680	0.9989
Australia	2.8525	12.325
Canada	1.6877	12.325
China	1.6877	12.325
France	3.9504	12.325
Germany	3.9504	12.325
India	160.33	12.325
Italy	3.9504	12.325
Japan	160.33	12.325
South Africa	160.33	12.325
Spain	160.33	12.325
Sweden	160.33	12.325
Switzerland	160.33	12.325
UK	160.33	12.325
USA	160.33	12.325

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; low to high are at a premium.

*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.

For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0801 123 3033.

Cable 2221 54p per minute.

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	6.75%	5.50%	5.50%
Prime	6.75%	5.50%	5.50%
Discount	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Overnight	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
3 Month	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
6 Month	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
12 Month	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

Bond Yields as at 10:00

Country	5yr	10yr	yield %
UK	7.75%	7.75%	7.75%
Germany	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
US	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Japan	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%

Money Market Rates as at 10:00

Overnight	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	
Bank	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Local Authority	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Discount	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Treasury Bills	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Call Money	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
EU Linked Dep	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

Tourist Rates as at 10:00

Country	£ Buys	£ Buys
Australia	2.8525	2.8525
Canada	2.2193	2.2193
France	3.9504	3.9504
Germany	3.9504	3.9504
Italy	3.9504	3.9504
Japan	160.33	160.33
Spain	160.33	160.33
Sweden	160.33	160.33
Switzerland	160.33	160.33
UK	160.33	160.33
USA	160.33	160.33

Life Financial Futures as at 10:00

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	EstCont	Open
Long UK	160.33	160.33	160.33	160.33
Short UK	160.33	160.33	160.33	160.33
Long US	160.33	160.33	160.33	160.33
Short US	160.33	160.33	160.33	160.33

Life FTSE 100 Index Options as at 10:00

Series	4700	4750	4800	Call/Put
Aug	160.33			

Delayed trials pose another setback for British Biotech

Taking Stock

Data Bank

FTSE 100
4799.5 +31.7

FTSE 250
4408.3 +22.1

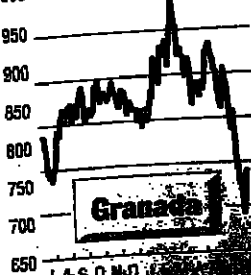
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SEAQ VOLUME
970.7m shares,
54,752 bargains

Gifts Index
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Share spotlight

share price, pence



What price British Biotech? The loss-making drug group, once near to joining Footsie, has been in the stock market casualty ward this week following disappointing evidence that some of its key treatments are running behind schedule.

The shares recovered an early fall, struggling in heavy trading, to a 2p gain at 154.5p; they were 201p on Wednesday. Then the group said it was expanding trials for Zactar, a treatment for pancreatitis, which would delay any approval, and phase III trial data on its big hope Marimastat cancer drug would not be available until early 1999.

The stock market has been wrestling with the BrioBio price since excitement over its possible cancer treatment sent the shares soaring last year to a remarkable 326.5p.

They drifted steadily lower before falling steeply since Wednesday.

There is still a wide range of valuations. Credit Lyonnais Laing say the shares are a sell down to 100p; BZW believe they should be sold to 125p but Lehman Brothers reckon they are a buy at 150p.

BrioBio could have a difficult time: there is talk it is in the sights of two determined bear raiders, one a US fund.

The market, despite another strong display by sterling, moved confidently ahead with Footsie gaining 31.7 points to 4,799.5. Even the FTSE 250 index made headway, ending a five-day losing streak with a 22.1 advance to 4,408.3.

But BT, riding at a 501.5p peak a week ago, missed the fun. The shock profits warnings from its intended US merger partner, MCI, was an expensive misdeal, sending the shares crashing 57p to 440.5p. At one time they were down 51p. Turnover was huge - approaching 200 million shares.



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Granada, the leisure group, led the blue-chip leader board with a 48p (after 57p) gain to 786p. British Digital Broadcasting, the group it owns with Carlton Communications, was largely responsible. Granada, indulging in a round of investment meetings, talked enthusiastically about BDB's prospects and likely impact on trading. Carlton caught some of the attention, gaining 16.5p to 517p.

Lehman Brothers also helped the Granada show. It pointed out the shares had underperformed, falling from a 978.5p peak. Analyst Fraser Ramzan said the fall was "unjustified", leaving the shares cheap.

First Leisure Corporation, where profits have disappeared, gained 9.5p to 316p as takeover stories re-emerged. Rank, also a poor performer, was named as the most likely bidder. It rose 5p to 368.5p.

But Bass, denied Carlsberg-Tetley and anxiously seeking a deal, could be the predator. Both groups have bingo and bowling interests. The brewing group would find FLC valued at more than £500m, the used at more than £200m.

In what has for months been an exceedingly sober brewing sector Bass rose 19.5p to 828.5p as the feelgood factor

created by the building society windfalls spread wider. Whitbread improved 39p to 832p and Scottish & Newcastle 32.5p to 739p. Among the regional groups Greene King put on 16.5p to 697.5p.

Eurotunnel returned after the restructuring approval - and closed off 5p lower at 76.5p.

General Electric Co jumped 17.5p to 377p on the government's concession it could increase its Plessey involvements and its decision to go for another joint venture, a £1bn defence link with Finmeccanica.

Dairy groups were firm, seemingly on ABN Amro Hoare Govett support. The investment house expects the cost of their milk to be reduced. Northern Foods put on 7p to 212.5p and Unigate 12.5p to 501p.

British Land's £140m property sale left some wondering

about war chest ambitions. The shares rose 21.5p to 627p with possible target. Ham-merson, up 16.5p to 477.5p.

LucasVarity, the car components group, fell 4p to 194p as more downgrades appeared. TI, the engineer, gained a further 12.5p to 495p as the market 12.5p to appreciate its limited sterling exposure.

Somerfield, the supermarket chain reporting next week, hardened 6p to 193.5p, highest since its controversial flotation a year ago. Profits are expected to emerge at £103m against £86.2m.

Watts, Blake Beane, the world's largest ball clay (it's used in sanitary ware) producer, fell 10p to 405p, a 12-month low. Long time shareholder, Sibelco, a Belgian group, recently nudged its stake past 50 per cent. UBS is looking for WBB profits of £11.4m this year and £12.8m next. The shares were 520p last year.

□ Cash Converters, the second-hand shops chain, rose 3p to 18.5p after two executives each acquired a third of founder Brian Cummins' stake, giving each of them holdings of around 10 per cent each. The rest of the Cummins' shareholding will be placed. The company now has 375 stores in 16 countries. Since coming to market last year the shares have fallen from 31.5p.

□ It's getting near to crunch time for Emerald Energy. In the next week or so the fate of its first Colombian drilling venture could be known. There were some suggestions the next report will be favourable, lifting the shares 0.75p to 6.25p.

□ Cementone could be near its first buy, expected to be a media deal. The shares rose 4.5p to 67.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: ex rights x; ex dividend x; ex full of United Securities Market's Suspended; pp Partly Paid; pm Paid Shares; 2 AM Stock

Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 321 321 and when prompted to do so, enter the eight code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports of 1987 follow-up by one of the two-digit codes below.

Anyone with a land-line telephone can use the service. For a detailed description of the Independent Index, including its portfolio, location, and other details, call 0800 321 321. For assistance, call our helpline 071 975 0275 (9.00am - 5.00pm).

Costs: 30p per minute. Call charges include VAT.

Property

Share Price Data

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Where would you like to go this weekend?

Costa Rica
or
Biking in France...?

Wherever you want to go in the UK or Overseas. See it in Travel 'Travel & Money' every Sunday

INDEPENDENT

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Woods to pass the Troon test

The American golfing phenomenon is ideally equipped for the Open's links challenge, his rivals tell Andy Farrell

Some 35 years ago, Arnold Palmer conjured a performance of typical brilliance at Troon and so helped launch the Open Championship into the modern era. It was Palmer's second consecutive victory and thousands gathered to see the charismatic American. It also ensured that the best players in the world would annually flock to experience the mysteries and the vagaries of the British seaside links.

Tiger Woods arrives at Royal Troon next week as the game's latest talisman, and possibly its best player ever. "This is the first chance for people to see him in the flesh as professional," Brian Anderson, the club pro for 26 years, said. "I am sure there will be a record gate."

Woods' career, launched as a three-time US Amateur champion last September, has been mesmerising and unmissable to date, and his activities at the 120th Open will be no different. The Woods phenomenon has gone far past the sports pages, taking in controversies of various hues and fuelled by his father Earl's assertion: "Tiger will do more than any other man in history to change the course of humanity."

This was a heavy burden to place on the 21-year-old self-styled "Cabinasian" - he is part Caucasian, part black, part native American and part Asian - but one partly shouldered by endorsements totalling almost \$100m (£61m). His victory last week at the Western Open in Chicago was his sixth in 21 starts on the US Tour and took him back to the top of the world rankings.

Some of those wins have been achieved with what he calls his "B" or "C" game. For a demonstration of his "A" game look no further than his US

Masters victory, where he became the youngest winner, set the lowest score and won by the biggest margin. A spell of tournaments in which Woods, who has yet to miss a cut as a pro, did not contend, including the US Open where he was 19th, led to talk of a slump. All he needed was a week at home with his feet up to dispel such nonsense.

In two previous appearances at the Open as an amateur, Woods finished 68th at St Andrews in 1993, and 22nd last year at Royal Lytham, his best result to date in a pro event and significant in his decision to turn pro a month later. Conditions in Lancashire were dry and calm, while Troon, on the Ayrshire coast, may present a sterner test.

Woods has overpowered courses all around the world, but Troon, while presenting a long-haul back nine of 3,650 yards with a miserly par of only 35, re-

quires more of its would-be conquerors. *Tam aite quam marie* is the club's motto, meaning "As much by skill as by strength."

Woods' length off the tee was the dominant factor in his Masters victory. He averages more than 320 yards swinging at only 75 per cent, is 6ft 2in and weighs 11st.

"The Holy Grail of golf is power and accuracy," said Rick Adams who, with Mark Glynn, from the Taylor Made Long Driving team. "Tiger hits the ball with low spin, both backwards and forwards and sideways. That means he generates lots of roll, and the ball flies straighter."

This is due to his textbook swing. "There is width when he takes the club away and he maintains that width throughout the swing. He does not make the arc any shallower



Troon's armoury: The Postage Stamp par-three eighth is one of the holes where Tiger Woods (inset) will have to 'mind his p's and q's' Photographs: Allsport (main) and Empics

during the swing, it remains on the same plane. It's like a smothering of the ball. If you play a table tennis shot and you want to hit it with side spin, it is a short, choppy action. But if you want top spin, it is a long movement.

Central to this is the stability Woods creates in his legs. "If you watch his legs during the swing, they are totally planted as this massive coil is going on in his upper body. The legs don't move, so he can whip his arms through at pace."

Nick Faldo, confirmed this. "The only time I can create such arm-speed," he said, "is when I drive with my elbow hanging out of the car window."

But while huge hitting and inspired putting served him fine at the Masters, Troon will require more of the Mozart of the greens. "The most important

thing for Tiger will be his club selection," Anderson said. "He has to choose the right clubs to make sure he is on the fairways. He will be using a lot of irons off the tee. The rough is very penal. It's not like Augusta, where you can hit the ball anywhere."

Greg Norman, twice an Open champion, visited Troon last weekend. "The fairways are down to 28-32 yards," he reported. "The rough is not thick all the way round, but it is there in patches and where it is, it is 10-inch long wispy grass. I don't care how strong you are, that grabs your shaft and the harder you try to hit it, the more it goes left. Everyone will go in it and everyone will have problems."

Norman, who set the course record with a 64 in 1989 before being foiled in the play-off by Mark Calcavecchia, describes the uniqueness of playing links

golf by as when "you hit two-irons from 98 yards and 108 yards, stuff like that. You don't practice those shots, but you are hoping, in a sadistic way, that you have to play them some time because it is such a challenge. You don't play any of that golf in America."

The American Payne Stewart has finished in the top 10 five times at the Open, including at Troon in '89. "The first time I played the British Open was at St Andrews in '84 and I hated the course," he recalled. "Now St Andrews is right up there as one of my favourite courses. It takes time, but you learn to love links golf for what it is. You have to focus down more."

"You have to see the ball bouncing around on the ground and rolling. In the States, you are seeing the ball up and you have nice conditions. Generally,

at the British Open, you get some nasty weather, so you have to bring the ball down to keep it out of that, and then you have to see it bounce around a little bit and have some imagination to see it catch on that hump and roll down here."

"It is fun, a challenge to manoeuvre the ball around. At Troon, you have to mind your p's and q's. There are some holes you play away from the pin and some holes you attack the pin. Take the Postage Stamp (the par-three eighth). It could be an eight-iron, it could be a pitching wedge, but you don't miss the green to the right, or long. So when they put the pin in the back right corner, yes, you'd like to put it in really close but you'd better be short of the hole."

"St Andrews will suit Tiger Woods' game to a tee. In the

same way it did John Daly in '95. Troon is a little different. You have to scuttle it around the bunkers. But he can do things with a golf ball that I can't relate to. His biggest asset is the control he has of his game."

One area Woods has had difficulty in playing in the wind, but the tearaway amateur, whose distance control with his irons was off beam when he lost to Gary Wolstenholme in the Walker Cup at Royal Portlough in 1995, is no more. Woods, though, his his short-iron shots so high that he can still get into trouble. In a windy final round of the Colonial in May, he caused a shock by failing to convert a winning position on the back nine.

Anderson, for one, thinks we will be seeing a new Woods, hitting little knockdown shots and chip and runs. "A player of

his accomplishment will be able to adjust very quickly," he said. "It was always said that the Ryder Cup should go to a links course, but the history of American success at the Open shows that they can adapt to play links golf as well as anybody."

The last four winners at Troon (Palmer, Tom Weiskopf, Tom Watson and Calcavecchia) have all been American, as have the champions in the past two years. The frightening prospect is that the way Troon is set up, with three short par-fours in the first six holes, Woods could make Norman's feat of starting with six birdies in his final round eight years ago appear a conservative opening. As Norman said: "He is good enough to deal with any weather and any golf course."

You have been warned.

Fulke's 12 birdies fail to fell Lehman

ANDY FARRELL

reports from Loch Lomond

It was a dull day on the Bonnie Banks, but only in the sense of the weather. The sun did not quite break through all day, but with hardly a breath of wind and the fairways and greens soft after the rain of Thursday, the Loch Lomond course was there for the taking.

Tom Lehman, the second-round leader by three strokes, may have expected a few people to make an advance. He probably did not expect someone to make 12 birdies during the day, as Pierre Fulke did. The 26-year-old Swede, however, twice bogeyed the 15th and, on

13 under, is two strokes behind Lehman, who maintained his advantage with a 67, and two ahead of another American, Steve Jones.

Others came out of the pack, Payne Stewart, wearing Dress Stewart Tartan plus-fours, coming home in 30, although he is still back on seven under, and Ernie Els, returning in 31 to advance to nine under.

The South African was drawn to play with Colin Montgomerie and while Els is correct to dismiss a "me versus him" situation with two players down the field in the third round, the match-within-a-match followed much the same course as the battles they have enjoyed at more important moments. The US Open

champion shot a 65 to the Scot's 70, with the most significant factor the serial reduction in Els' scores, following rounds of 70 and 69, while Montgomerie has not quite got into top gear after his Irish Open win last week.

"I feel I can go lower still," Els said. "My game is there, but it is not going to back off and this is a good course for him. The golf course is in great shape but the weather is making it very playable."

Montgomerie suspected he was getting ahead of himself. "I think I am thinking about next week too much," he said. "I have one eye on Troon. I am not putting very well and it is hard to take his event in isolation."

Again, play was of the enjoying-the-scenery variety and not to the Scotsman's liking. "The whole business of slow play is just getting too much," Monty said. The problem here is a double green at the second and fourth, and a short hole (the fifth) being followed by a reachable par-five (the sixth).

"Colin and I are both quick players," Els added. "I still have not met a pro who wants to play slowly. If someone wants to play slowly, there are 150 other players."

"In America, the pace is a bit brisker and they don't wait to warn players. You go out knowing you will get a one-stroke penalty if you are slow. Maybe there are guys here who wait

to be warned and then speed up."

Greg Norman, who donned a flat Scottish cap for the occasion, was on eight under after a 69, and while the good news for Nick Faldo was that David Leadbetter turned up yesterday morning and the pair had a "good session", Faldo went backwards with a 72.

Fulke was one of 37 players to resume their second rounds at 6.45 in the morning. The Swede had played three holes when the thunderstorm came on Thursday, and he completed the front nine in the evening. Fulke resumed at the 10th and birdied five successive holes from the 11th in his 64. This was only the third cut he had made

all season - at two over Jose Maria Olazabal missed his first of the year - and he picked up five more birdies in six holes on the front nine of his third-round 66.

LOCH LOMOND WORLD BY-PRODUCTS Leading third-round scores (68 or less unless stated): 198 T Lehman (US) 65 68 67, 200 P Fulke (Swi) 70 64 66, 202 S Jones (US) 69 65 68, 204 E Els (SA) 70 69 65, 205 G Norman (Aus) 68 68 69, P Curry 68 72 70, 208 P Stewart (US) 73 67 66, A Cabrera (Arg) 67 72 67, S Day (US) 66 72 68, P Broadhurst 68 70 68, M Greenwood (Swi) 68 68 69, J Hoggart (Swi) 63 72 71, 207 C Woods (US) 70 71 69, P O'Malley (Aus) 71 68 68, T Purser (US) 68 69 70, 209 J Rank (Swi) 70 70 68, M James 72 71 65, 206 J Pernau (Swi) 70 71 68, J Bon (Can) 72 67 70, C Montgomerie 69 70 70, L Warr (US) 70 69 70, M Hallberg (Swi) 67 71 71, P Neumann (Swi) 73 70 69, L Westwood 70 73 66, S Pelt 68 68 73.

A Swede led after the first round of the US Women's Open, but it was not the defending champion, Annika Sorenstam, as Liselotte Neumann took charge on the Pumpkin Ridge course in Cornelius, Oregon.

Sorenstam, the pre-championship favourite, was upstaged by her compatriot, who compiled four birdies in a flawless four-under-par 67 in cool afternoon conditions following intermittent rain earlier in the day.

Neumann, the 1988 Open champion, was the only player in the 150-woman field not to make a bogey or worse as she matched her lowest round in a US Open.

She led by one stroke over the

Americans Susie Redman, Kelly Robbins and Deb Richard, and the 19-year-old South Korean, Se Ri Pak.

Redman was helped by the first hole-in-one of her career, which came at the 15th, where her six-iron bounced three times and jumped into the cup. Sorenstam found no such joy in her round as she shot a six-over 77 in a dreadful start to her quest to win the event for an unprecedented three consecutive years.

Laura Davies, who won in 1987, opened a gash in her left index finger while slicing some bread before the first round and she shot a 75 to stand eight strokes off the pace.

Charles laments lack of talent as Whitaker takes control

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY reports from Hickstead

Michael Whitaker continued to prove the strength of his string of show jumpers yesterday when he rode Virtual Village Ashley to win the Royal International Grand Prix.

The contest incorporated the second of four new International Championship British Team Trials to be held this year and Whitaker, who won the first of them at Windsor on Absalom, remains unbeaten.

Yesterday he defeated Ireland's European champion, Peter Charles, on T'Aime, with Nick Skelton filling third place on the excellent eight-year-old stallion, Tinka's Boy.

No new talent has emerged in these trials so far. Instead they seem to be achieving their other purpose in proving that Britain's regular team members (the Whitaker brothers, Skelton and Geoff Billington) really are the best in the country. Others can, it is said, stop moaning about there being a closed shop.

The course, according to

Whitaker, was "not crazy big". Indeed Michael Bullman, chairman of the selection committee, felt that it was too small, but it was made more demanding when the fences were raised for the jump-off.

The winning horse, Ashley, will not necessarily be Whitaker's mount for next month's European Show Jumping Championships at Mannheim in Germany. His more experienced mount, Twostep, is now back in work, having suffered from back problems which resulted from him having three vertebrae too close together. The horse should be reappearing in a couple of weeks' time.

Skelton is beginning to believe that Tinka's Boy, although only an eight-year-old, should be his European Championships partner. "Everyone else thinks so," he said. "He's brave and careful and he has enough ability."

The lack of emerging talent does not, however, bode well for British show jumping. Peter Charles, for long frustrated in his bid for a place on a British championship team before taking Irish nationality, believes

that there was much greater strength in depth a decade ago. Charles would have welcomed team trials when he was riding for Britain, but he wonders about their validity now. "You can't knock them, but it's a bit like going through the motions, because there aren't enough good horses and riders around," he said. "At the moment the British are very weak."

Charles is short of top horsepower himself. An injury to his best mount, La Ina, who damaged his off-foreleg on the first day of the Aachen show in Germany last month, means that he will not be defending his European title next month.

"I would love to go to the Championships and do well, I'm very ambitious," Charles said. "But if the horses I have can't do a good enough job there's no point in going."

ROYAL INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW (Hickstead, Sussex): Royal International Grand Prix (incorporating the International Championship British Team Trials): 1 Virtual Village Ashley (M Whitaker, GB) clear, 54.50; 2 T'Aime (P Charles, Irl) clear, 55.50; 3 Virtual Village Tinka's Boy (N Skelton, GB) clear, 57.50. Royal International Speed Challenge: 1 Paddy (P Gouret, Ger) 55.50; 2 Virtual Village Hunter's Level (J Whitaker, GB) 56.37; 3 Convent Hal Diamond (J Solihull, Irl) 56.42.

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sport

Ravanelli to hold talks at Everton

Football

NICK DUXBURY AND ALAN NIXON

Fabrizio Ravanelli, who does not get out of bed for less than £42,000 a week, will rouse himself from his hideaway in Italy on Monday and fly to England for talks about a £7.5m move to Everton.

Lengthy long-distance discussions yesterday ended with the Middlesbrough striker, who had rejected Everton last week while he negotiated with Liverpool, willing to reconsider a transfer.

Howard Kendall will now have the task of selling Everton to Ravanelli with the knowledge that the Italian international is unlikely to agree to a drop in wages.

Everton's desperate need for reinforcements is such that they are likely to equal Ravanelli's salary at Boro, even though it would wreck the Goodison pay structure. Ravanelli was prepared to take less at Liverpool but his personal terms have now risen again.

However, as Everton and Ravanelli, who is allergic to Nationwide League football, need each other at the moment, what looked an unlikely marriage could be consummated soon.

First of all though, Everton have a divorce to sort out and among the envelopes popping through the Goodison letterbox yesterday was a writ from Sheffield United who have started legal proceedings against the club and Kendall following the former Blades manager's defection.

United, who demanded £1m in compensation for Kendall's departure, have grown tired of waiting for an amicable settlement. "I am very annoyed that Everton have been extremely slow and unforthcoming and have not fulfilled the promises that were made when we initially gave permission for Everton to approach Howard Kendall," Charles Green, United's chief executive, said. "I feel that the only way forward now is for lawyers to resolve the situation."

The Swedish international Martin Dahlin has completed his £2.5m move to Blackburn Rovers from Roma. Roy Hodgson, who was also Dahlin's manager at Malmö, said: "Martin is a top striker. I believe he could be a big hit in the Premiership and at 29 he is probably at the peak of his game. I have no worries about him whatsoever."

Dahlin, who has scored 27

goals in 51 internationals, will team up today with the Blackburn party who, conveniently, are on a 10-day trip to his homeland.

Sheffield Wednesday are chasing the Ukrainian winger Sergei Nahorniyak. Wednesday are prepared to pay Dnipro Retovsk £1m for the 25-year-old international, who is rated the best player in the Ukraine since Andrei Kanchelskis.

"I have heard excellent reports about this boy from former Coventry and Leicester manager Gordon Milne whose judgement I respect," David Platt, the Wednesday manager. "We are hoping to have the player over here next week to speak to him, but first we need permission from his club and we are working on that."

From rages to rhymes, you get the lot at Arsenal with the discovery that Tony Adams is into poetry the day after team-mate Ian Wright was fined a record £15,000 by the Football Association for misconduct.

The 30-year-old Adams, who confessed to being an alcoholic a year ago, has successfully changed his lifestyle which now includes verse and Thomas Hardy, and Arsenal stand to reap the benefits.

"Football players have a lot of pressure on them, but reading can give you peace of mind," professor Gary Cooper, a sports psychologist said. "It will improve him as a person and that will improve him as a player."

Adams, who joins Eric Cantona as a lover of literature, will have plenty of time for a few chapters when the season starts - he is suspended for the first two games.

The hordes of green and white shirts heading for Wales on 23 July will have to divert from Leekwith Stadium to Ninian Park following Inter CableTel's decision to move the first leg of their Uefa Cup qualifying round tie against Celtic.

"Although we are disappointed not to play Celtic on our own pitch, it is more important that we are able to accommodate the thousands of fans who want to see the match," Max James, the chairman of the League of Wales side, said.

"It will still be very much a home game for us because Ninian Park was our base in 1994 when we first qualified for European competition."

Should Inter CableTel make it to the final, their players will need to take only one day off work. Uefa has scrapped the final's two-leg format to bring it into line with the Cup-Winners' Cup and European Cup finals.



All fall down: A pile-up in the peloton unseats Tour de France riders during Stage Six between Le Blanc and Marennes yesterday. Photograph: AFP

Steels expelled for throwing bottle

Cycling

DERRICK WHYTE reports from Marennes

Germany's Erik Zabel was disqualified and placed last after winning a rough sprint finish to the sixth stage of the Tour de France here yesterday.

The stage was awarded to Jeroen Blijlevens, who had finished second, after Zabel was stripped of the victory for what race officials described as "irregular sprinting". It was the third successive year that the Dutchman had claimed a stage victory.

The German was placed last on the list of finishers in the 215.5km (134 miles) stage from Le Blanc, while Belgium's Tom Steels has been expelled from the Tour for violent behaviour during the sprint for the line.

Steels was seen by Tour officials to throw his water bottle at the Frenchman Frédéric Moncassin.

Zabel, who won Tuesday's third stage, sprinted clear in the final straight and eased home ahead of Blijlevens and Djamolidine Abdoujaparov, of Uzbekistan. Cedric Vasseur retained the yellow jersey for France. Zabel would have

moved up to second place in the overall standings ahead of the Italian Mario Cipollini had he not been penalised. The 27-year-old German reportedly aimed a headbutt at Moncassin, who was disqualified from this season's Dauphiné Libéré for headbutting Zabel's team-mate, Rolf Aldag.

The controversial final sprint was also marked by Steels, the Belgian national champion, throwing his bottle at Moncassin after the Frenchman changed in

front of him. Steels was subsequently thrown out of the Tour for "violent behaviour towards others" in the main group.

The stage saw the usual series of falls and pile-ups, which at one point left Vasseur, the first Frenchman to wear the yellow jersey since Stéphane Heulot retired during the seventh stage last year, 200 yards adrift of the main group of riders. He managed to regain his ground, helped by his team-mate, Britain's Chris Boardman.

"It was a dream today to see one's name painted on the road every kilometre. It was something I won't forget for the rest of my life," said Vasseur.

The 33-year-old Abdoujaparov, three times winner of the green jersey, had been in a two-man breakaway with the Swiss rider Rolf Jaermann, winner of the Amstel Gold race in 1993, which built up a lead of over a minute and 40 seconds. Abdoujaparov, nine-times a stage winner in the Tour de

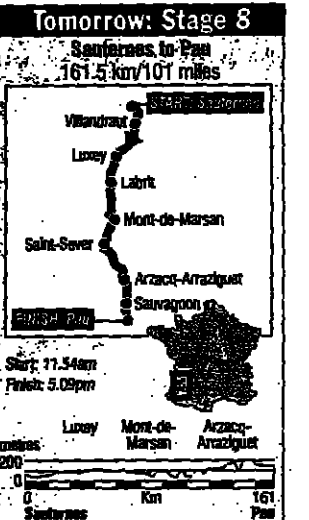
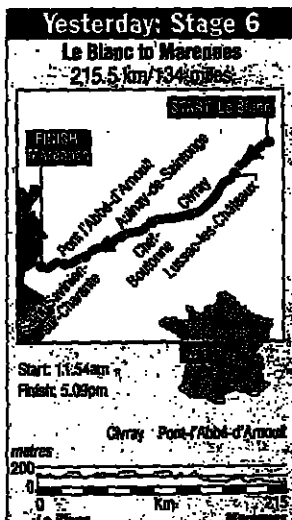
France, and Jaermann failed to take advantage of the disruption to the pack after the incident when Vasseur was left trailing. They were reeled in with 13km to go. Several teams, including Mapei, Batk and GAN, led the chase as they realised that chances for their sprinters to win a stage were running out before Monday's first mountain stage in the Pyrenees.


Pascal Lance, a time-trial specialist, had earlier broken up the leisurely pace of the pack by launching the first attack and building up a lead of 50 seconds with 60km to go. However, the 33-year-old Frenchman, eight-times a time-trial stage winner, was unable to sustain the pace on his own and was reeled in.

Cipollini was involved in the second of the pile-ups, cutting his right knee and injuring his hand. He was not a happy man after having a blazing row with his team manager, Antonio Saliuti, on Thursday night about the lack of support he received earlier in the day, when he lost his yellow jersey to Vasseur.


The stage had to be diverted after demonstrators protesting over a planned nuclear dump blocked the planned route with nine tractors.

John Lichfield, page 11






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BRITISH GRAND PRIX

sport

Damon Hill's move into the wings of Formula One has left the stage clear for another driver to emerge as the main home contender at tomorrow's British Grand Prix and beyond. **Derick Allsop** talks to the three would-be standard bearers

Princes of speed chase the crown

'My value would be higher if I had stayed at Jordan'

EDDIE IRVINE Ferrari
Age 31 GPs 56 Wins 0

When anyone flirts with professional suicide you have to wonder or admire. Those who wonder are now beginning to admire Eddie Irvine.

The 31-year-old Ulsterman paid a heavy price when he indulged the fantasy of most racing drivers and signed for Ferrari. Certainly he was guaranteed generous remuneration and he has never hidden his hedonistic tendencies.

But consider the quid pro quo: his team-mate is Michael Schumacher and his self-appointed judge and jury are the Italian media. On the face of it, a mission impossible bound to end in recrimination and tears. In actuality, the twin burdens appear to cause him not a flicker of anxiety.

He is dismissive, even scornful, of the press and broadcasting pack that pursues Ferrari's every move, and shrugs off persistent speculation about his future in one word: "Boring".

He does, however, articulate at length his desire to extend into a third year his association with the legendary marque, which would mean another season alongside Schumacher, a man he considers capable of things even the beatified Ayrton Senna could not do. The German, he figures, can help him establish his own championship credentials.

Irvine said: "I think my stock market value would be higher if I was still at Jordan and I won't be able to become champion while Michael is my team-mate. But if things go on improving at Ferrari the way they are, and I'm second behind Michael next season, I think that could get me a top drive the following year."

"Sure, I could move now and get a better personal position within a team, because it would be relying on me more than Ferrari are. They rely on Michael and what I bring home is a bonus."

"It's not good for your psyche or your ego, but I bought into that, so you either sink or swim. I've been closer to Michael in terms of lap times than any of his previous team-mates."

Irvine is afloat again after treading water in the early season. He has four podium finishes and fourth place in the drivers' standings, largely due to his combative racing rather than high grid positions. "My qualifying has generally been atrocious and I haven't a clue why," he said. But then he takes undisguised pride in his contribution to the Schumacher phenomenon. Irvine explained: "Michael has started left-foot braking at Ferrari, which Senna didn't do, and that's a big advantage. If he had done it before it would have given him an even bigger edge, but he's seen me doing it."

Not that Irvine demands comparison with the championship leader. "The only person who is a step above the rest of us is Michael. He's just amazing. After that it's difficult to say where the rest of us stand."

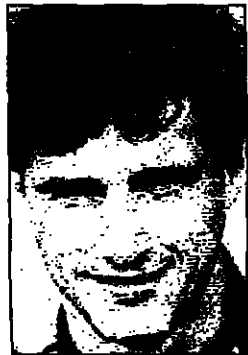
Irvine has consistently said he does not rate Damon Hill as exceptional and he contends: "Coulthard can't do anything I can't." But he applauds the Scot for his advance this season, as he does Johnny Herbert's endeavours with Sauber-Petronas.

"You look at David last year," Irvine said. "Hakkinen gave him a good hiding. This year the team have realised David's the more sensible guy and they're working with him. He's driving the team. He is doing a great job and got on top of Hakkinen."

"Johnny's also done a great job. Now he is Sauber's No. 1, the focus of the team is on him and his performances have been fantastic."

Like the other British drivers, Irvine yearns for success at Silverstone. He said: "I used to come to the British Grand Prix as a kid and loved the atmosphere. I'd always climb over a fence or dig a hole to get in. I wish it could be like that now. Instead it's just another race. I've probably got more fans at Inola."

"I loved the old Silverstone but it's been messed about too much. It's too artificial. And besides, I've never had anything but bad luck at Silverstone. It owes me. Maybe this time."



Irvine: paid heavy price



Man in the mask: Britain's David Coulthard contemplates the task ahead at Silverstone yesterday

Photograph: Robert Hallam

'I know that I can beat Schumacher'

DAVID COULTHARD McLaren
Age 26 GPs 49 Wins 2

heaving Silverstone testifies this weekend to the stature and appeal of Formula One in this country. Nigel Mansell, star of many an extravaganza here, is long gone; Damon Hill, focus of the recent past, is consigned to a bit part. Britain has no genuine championship contender this season, yet still the show is a sell-out.

There are, however, concerns for the future, suspicions that, as at Wimbledon, the gallery will ultimately be acknowledging the supremacy of foreign performers. The signs are that the supply line of British talent from lower formulae to Grand Prix racing may have been ruptured.

Optimistic talk of promising tires is not being translated into graduation to the main event. The new names are Ralf Schumacher, Giancarlo Fisichella, Alexander Wurz and Jarno Trulli.

Are those anxieties justified? David Coulthard, at 26 the youngest of the home drivers in the Formula One field, contends not and offers his perspective on the state of the nation.

He said: "We still have some great talent actually in Formula One capable of performing at the highest standard and likely to be around for some time to come."

"The overall picture has been distorted by the fact that Damon has left Williams and gone to Arrows. Put him back in a Williams and he would probably be winning the championship, and you would say that the general situation was very healthy. I think it still is."

"I'm racing closer to the front, I won in Melbourne and really should have won in Canada. Eddie is getting podium finishes on a regular basis with Ferrari and Johnny is having a really good season with Sauber."

"Williams must know that if they

kept Damon things would be different for them in the championship, and if they don't win it this year they've got to ask why. Now people are beginning to realise that Damon is a better driver than he is sometimes given credit for."

Coulthard is earning widespread credit for raising the level of his game this year. After an inconsistent first season with McLaren-Mercedes, he has emphatically eclipsed his once much vaunted team-mate, Mika Hakkinen, and the Finn is unlikely to be offered a new contract.

The Scot is hopeful he will be invited to stay on. He delivered the McLaren-Mercedes alliance their maiden success in Australia, on the opening day of the season, and had his clutch not given way in Montreal, last month, he would now be in contention in third place in the championship instead of a vexed seventh.

Coulthard is convinced he has the pace, race-craft and temperament to take the lead and race at the front. Having been with Damon at Williams, I don't see anything he can do that I can't.

"I feel comfortable with the part I've played in the team effort over the last year and a half. Obviously everybody would like to have Michael Schumacher, but I believe I'm ideally equipped, if we have the right package, to win the championship."

"I am now getting to the stage where I know I can race Michael and beat him. I've beaten him on the road twice this year. I've shown I've got the speed because Mika has always been regarded as very fast and I've been in front of him in qualifying, and scoring the first win gave me a psychological edge."

"Mika has been here for a long while and has done a great job, but it's more of a level playing field this year. It takes time to adapt and I have. I am performing at a high level. I've been stronger in every way, physically and mentally. I came out better prepared for this season, and I'm beginning to reap the benefits."

That mental work involves sessions with a psychologist, who has helped Coulthard see a clearer path to his objective, and even made dreams come true.

"Formula One is not just about driving a car," Coulthard explained. "It's a mental battle. In my earlier career qualifying wasn't my strongest

point, and I had to focus to improve my performance in that area."

"Clearing the mind and becoming more focused before qualifying and before a race does make a difference. It's visualisation. We all have good dreams about what we are going to do, and I wouldn't have believed it before, but I do now believe that if you keep your subconscious mind in a positive state you can make those dreams become reality."

"I don't want to get all freaky about it because I'm not that sort of person, but you do, in effect, drift into your inner self. The night before a race I can see in my mind where I am on the grid and try to imagine what the opposition are going to do, and where I'm going to go. You have to have some sort of plan at the back of your mind."

Coulthard concedes he does not envisage a win to share with the home crowd tomorrow afternoon.

He said: "On paper I've got the best chance of the Brits, but it's a difficult circuit for us. I wish I could foresee victory in the British Grand Prix, but unless Williams and Ferrari don't get it together, that's an improbable scenario."

"I need to finish the race and at least score points. We've thrown away 12 points in the last two races and, although I've had a better season in terms of performance, I've actually got fewer points at this stage of the season than I had last year. I believe I've had a better season than Eddie, and he's fourth in the championship."

"There's an increasing pressure on everyone in the team to win another race. Since that win in Melbourne we have been subjected to a higher level of pressure to repeat it. The next grand prix, at Hockenheim, maybe the place to achieve it. Unfortunately, Silverstone may not be."

'You need to be in the right place at the right time'

JOHNNY HERBERT Sauber
Age 33 GPs 103 Wins 2

At the age of 33, Johnny Herbert is enjoying a revival of form and reputation even he may not have considered probable when he was discarded by Benetton and sought refuge at the Swiss outpost of Sauber.

Midway through his second season with the team, he is being regarded as a serious protagonist, an adjective not readily used to describe Herbert.

His playful image has rarely amused employers of potential champions, but Sauber see a side he maintains existed all along.

He said: "I've always had this thing about being the nice guy, easy to talk to and have a laugh and a joke with. People see me as this cheeky chap. I don't mind that at all and the public seem to like it because I've always had a loyal following."

"You'll probably find nine people out of 10 don't know my car is a Sauber and haven't even heard of Sauber, but they know my name, and when the name of the driver is bigger than the car that can't be bad for the driver."

Damon is still the main man for the British fans because he's the world champion. David has the benefit of being with McLaren, which is still recognised as a big team, and it's a similar thing for Eddie at Ferrari. Whatever I do it's as Johnny Herbert."

He stresses, however, that Sauber have provided him with the environment to resuscitate his career. He left Benetton after the 1995 season with wins at Silverstone and Monza but shattered dreams, and he contemplated quitting Formula One.

Unlike Irvine, he could not come to terms with the limitations imposed as Michael Schumacher's No. 2. At Sauber they have welcomed Herbert's infectious sense of fun yet appreciate he has the talent and commitment to do the job, given the equipment and the backing.

He said: "Even though I had those two wins at Benetton the year with Michael harmed me a lot. My reputation definitely took a big knock. But since then I've actually got better. I am more confident and when you are more confident you're driving is better."

"If you haven't got fairness within a team you can't perform to your capabilities, but at Sauber they have treated me well and accept me for the kind of guy I am. I think I've repaid them with my driving."

"I'm fortunate I have not only an understanding team, but also the mental strength that has kept me going. My accident in '88, then losing my drive first time round with Benetton, the lows at Lotus and then Benetton a second time, have all been hard setbacks."

"But they have all made me tougher and enable me to take the pressures, because those pressures get greater all the time. It's a serious business. Yes, I still like to muck about, but at the right time. When I'm working I am very serious about it."

Ten years ago there was less pressure. You had time to settle into a team and find your form. Now no one gives you any time. You've got to get out there and do it. If you don't you are written off as no good. It's unfair, but it's the way the business has gone."

Herbert is the only British driver assured his job for next season but he acknowledges that Sauber are unlikely, in the next 12 months, to build a platform for the championship, so he must eventually move on to pursue his dream.

"We are looking at podium potential here and hopefully things will continue to improve," he said. "But I believe the championship is still a realistic target for me and I think achieving it is possible."

"My age and fitness are certainly no problem. Damon was 36 when he won the championship. Nigel Mansell was 39. What you need is to be in the right place at the right time, as they were."

"Eighteen months ago I was disillusioned and disenchanted. Now things have turned round for me. I could do another good job next year and end up in a Williams."



Herbert: Job assured

HOW THEY LINE UP AT SILVERSTONE

Arrows-Elf 1 Damon Hill (GB) Age 36, GPs 75, wins 21. Championships 1. 2 Pedro Diniz (Bra) Age 27, GPs 41, wins 0. Williams-Renault 3 Jacques Villeneuve (Can) Age 26, GPs 24, wins 7. 4 Heinz-Harald Frentzen (Ger) Age 30, GPs 56, wins 1. Ferrari 5 Michael Schumacher (Ger) Age 28, GPs 92, wins 25, Championships 2. 6 Eddie Irvine (GB) Age 31, GPs 56, wins 0. Benetton-Renault 7 Jean Alesi (Fr) Age 33, GPs 126, wins 1. 8 Alexander Wurz (Aut) Age 23, GPs 2, wins 0. McLaren-Mercedes 9 Mika Hakkinen (Fin) Age 28, GPs 87, wins 0. 10 David Coulthard (GB) Age 26, GPs 49, wins 2. Jordan-Peugeot 11 Ralf Schumacher (Ger) Age 22, GPs 8, wins 0. 12 Giancarlo Fisichella (It) Age 24, GPs 16, wins 0. Prost-Jaguar-Honda 13 Jarno Trulli (It) Age 25, GPs 8, wins 0. 14 Mika Salo (Fin) Age 26, GPs 8, wins 0.	Sauber-Petronas 16 Johnny Herbert (GB) Age 33, GPs 103, wins 2. 17 Norberto Fontana (Arg) Age 22, GPs 1, wins 0. Tyrrell-Ford 18 Jos Verstappen (Neth) Age 25, GPs 38, wins 0. 19 Mika Salo (Fin) Age 30, GPs 43, wins 0. Minardi-Hart 20 Ukyo Katayama (Japan) Age 34, GPs 85, wins 0. 21 Taro Marques (Bra) Age 21, GPs 3, wins 0. Stewart-Ford 22 Rubens Barrichello (Bra) Age 25, GPs 72, wins 0. 23 Jan Magnussen (Den) Age 23, GPs 8, wins 0.	Constructors' championship 1 Ferrari 55pts 2 Williams-Renault 25 3 Benetton-Renault 25 4 McLaren-Mercedes 21 5 Prost-Jaguar-Honda 16 6 Jordan-Peugeot 13 7 Sauber-Petronas 8 8 Stewart-Ford 6 9 Tyrrell-Ford 6 10 Minardi-Hart 5 11 Jos Verstappen 5 12 Taro Marques 3 13 Jos Verstappen 3 14 Jos Verstappen 3 15 Jos Verstappen 3 16 Jos Verstappen 3 17 Jos Verstappen 3 18 Jos Verstappen 3 19 Jos Verstappen 3 20 Jos Verstappen 3 21 Jos Verstappen 3 22 Jos Verstappen 3 23 Jos Verstappen 3 24 Jos Verstappen 3 25 Jos Verstappen 3 26 Jos Verstappen 3 27 Jos Verstappen 3 28 Jos Verstappen 3 29 Jos Verstappen 3 30 Jos Verstappen 3 31 Jos Verstappen 3 32 Jos Verstappen 3 33 Jos Verstappen 3 34 Jos Verstappen 3 35 Jos Verstappen 3 36 Jos Verstappen 3 37 Jos Verstappen 3 38 Jos Verstappen 3 39 Jos Verstappen 3 40 Jos Verstappen 3 41 Jos Verstappen 3 42 Jos Verstappen 3 43 Jos Verstappen 3 44 Jos Verstappen 3 45 Jos Verstappen 3 46 Jos Verstappen 3 47 Jos Verstappen 3 48 Jos Verstappen 3 49 Jos Verstappen 3 50 Jos Verstappen 3 51 Jos Verstappen 3 52 Jos Verstappen 3 53 Jos Verstappen 3 54 Jos Verstappen 3 55 Jos Verstappen 3 56 Jos Verstappen 3 57 Jos Verstappen 3 58 Jos Verstappen 3 59 Jos Verstappen 3 60 Jos Verstappen 3 61 Jos Verstappen 3 62 Jos Verstappen 3 63 Jos Verstappen 3 64 Jos Verstappen 3 65 Jos Verstappen 3 66 Jos Verstappen 3 67 Jos Verstappen 3 68 Jos Verstappen 3 69 Jos Verstappen 3 70 Jos Verstappen 3 71 Jos Verstappen 3 72 Jos Verstappen 3 73 Jos Verstappen 3 74 Jos Verstappen 3 75 Jos Verstappen 3 76 Jos Verstappen 3 77 Jos Verstappen 3 78 Jos Verstappen 3 79 Jos Verstappen 3 80 Jos Verstappen 3 81 Jos Verstappen 3 82 Jos Verstappen 3 83 Jos Verstappen 3 84 Jos Verstappen 3 85 Jos Verstappen 3 86 Jos Verstappen 3 87 Jos Verstappen 3 88 Jos Verstappen 3 89 Jos Verstappen 3 90 Jos Verstappen 3 91 Jos Verstappen 3 92 Jos Verstappen 3 93 Jos Verstappen 3 94 Jos Verstappen 3 95 Jos Verstappen 3 96 Jos Verstappen 3 97 Jos Verstappen 3 98 Jos Verstappen 3 99 Jos Verstappen 3 100 Jos Verstappen 3
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David Coulthard's driver's guide to Silverstone

Lap Record: 1:22.516
228.002 kmh/141.674 mph
Damon Hill (1993)
Circuit length: 5.057 km/3.044 mi

Key corners and sections: Copse Corner, Maggots Curve, Brooklands, Priory Corner, Becketts Corner, Chapel Curve, Hangar Straight, Stowe Corner, Vale Corner, Club Corner, Abbey Curve, Farm Straight, Bridge, Luffield, Woodcote, Pit lane entrance.

Speed mph: 100, 120, 140, 160, 180, 200, 220, 240, 260, 280, 300, 320, 340, 360, 380, 400, 420, 440, 460, 480, 500, 520, 540, 560, 580, 600, 620, 640, 660, 680, 700, 720, 740, 760, 780, 800, 820, 840, 860, 880, 900, 920, 940, 960, 980, 1000.

The latest changes to Silverstone have made it a faster, more demanding and more satisfying circuit to drive. The downside is that overtaking opportunities are going to be limited and we may be having to wait for mistakes as tiredness, perhaps, takes effect.

Copse, the first corner, is blind and very fast. No breaking down a gear and on the power again. You've got to pick the apex before you arrive at it. Becketts is, I believe, the most exciting and spectacular section of the circuit. The first part is sixth, then you are down a gear for the last part. You need to flow as smoothly as possible and have the momentum for Hangar Straight. Becketts is a place I would recommend for spectators.

Along Hangar Straight, the fastest part of the circuit, and into Stowe is probably going to provide the best chance to overtake.

Through Club the cars will twitch as drivers get on the power and although Abbey is a pretty straight-forward chicane

It's another good viewing point because you can get close to the cars. Bridge is a fifth gear corner, taken flat. Then you are into the complex, which has been improved and has provided one or two spills in the past. You may recall Damon Hill and Michael Schumacher going off together here in 1995. If you want to see the cars for a relatively long period of time, then this is the place to be. It is fairly slow, second gear.

Coming out of Luffield you are back on the power and up through the gears as you sweep around Woodcote and across the start/finish line.

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Oxx to end the O'Brien monopoly

Racing
GREG WOOD

Racing has its Triple Crown but it does not, as yet, have an achievement which deserves to be called a Grand Slam. If anyone in Europe could be expected to come up with one, however, it is surely Aidan O'Brien, who has already broken almost every record on the Irish turf, and by tomorrow evening could well be fourth-fifth of the way towards a remarkable clean-sweep of Ireland's Classics.

Victory for one of O'Brien's runners in tomorrow's Irish Oaks at the Curragh would leave just the Irish St Leger, probably the weakest of the lot, to complete his set for 1997, following the earlier successes of Caelia, the Irish 1,000 Guineas and Derby King in both the 2,000 Guineas and Derby.

There will be those who would argue that the most exciting young talent in any sport to appear in Europe this week will be Tiger Woods, but while he may not be able to boast the endorsement contracts or the million-dollar smile (or any sort of smile, for that matter), O'Brien appears every bit as likely to set new standards for many years to come.

It makes it all the more interesting that it is the pre-eminent British trainer of the previous generation, Henry Cecil, who will saddle Yashmak, the principal rival to O'Brien's team of Strawberry Road, Family Tradition and Shell Ginger tomorrow afternoon.

Unlike several members of her family, Yashmak failed to reach the frame in the Oaks at Epsom last month, finishing fourth behind her stablemate Reams Of Verse, but she then made light of the supposed disadvantage faced by Oaks runners in Royal Ascot's Ribblesdale Stakes, winning by nine lengths.

The bare form of that race gives Cecil and Kieren Fallon an outstanding chance of securing a Group One victory at the end of what has been a very difficult week, yet it was Yashmak's first victory in Group company and it came on rain-softened ground, which must be cause for concern given that the going at the Curragh is expected to be on the fast side of good.

A sound surface could also prove to be bad news for the connections of Brilliance, who finished third in the Prix de Diane (French Oaks) after a difficult run and has been supplemented this week at a cost of IR£25,000.

In fact, all three of the leading favourites for the race might

prefer an easier surface, and it may pay to take them all on with Ebadia. John Oxx's filly suffered from inexperience and a less than perfect ride when backed down to 15-2 for the Oaks at Epsom, but still finished less than two lengths behind Yashmak. That was only the third race of her career, and with only normal improvement, she must go close to reversing the form tomorrow. Certainly, at around 6-1, against the 6-4 available about Yashmak, value-seekers will need no further persuasion.

If O'Brien's Classic run comes to an end, he should at least be able to contemplate the start of another when King Of Kings, already 6-1 favourite for next year's 2,000 Guineas, contests the main supporting event, the Anglesey Stakes.

The big race of the weekend in Britain is the John Smith's Magnnet Cup at York, a white-

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Game Ploy (York 4.15)
NB: So Intrepid (York 4.45)

hot contest which often tends to reflect the rough-and-tumble in the Knavesmere's bars with a series of bumps and blocks out on the track. This should be borne in mind before anyone gets involved with the gamble which has seen Pasternak, unraced this season, backed from 8-1 to 3-1 this week, and that after Sir Mark Prescott, his trainer, commented that "8-1 is short enough" after the first prices appeared.

Sir Mark, of course, is one of the shrewdest handlers in the country, and Pasternak may well be ready to run for his life today, but it is a runner from one of the few yards which can match Prescott's for canmness who catches the eye. SOUTHERLY WIND (nap 4.15), trained by Lynda Ramsden, caught the eye when finishing in mid-division in the King George V Handicap at Royal Ascot, on ground which was probably too soft and over a trip (a mile and a half) which was probably a furlong or two too far. Drawn well in stall two (just outside Pasternak, on the rail in one), he should find today's trip and going ideal, and must be worth a bet at around 14-1.

Another of Mrs Ramsden's runners, Stackattack (3.10), should also benefit from a return to a sound surface after floundering in the mud at Newcastle last time, and the stable will also have high hopes of Top Coes in the Foster's Silver Cup, though Better Off (next best 3.40) may have his measure.

YORK

3.10: Zekle Zekle is a long-shot but appears to be coming to hand; a high draw can often be a disadvantage here. Lynda Ramsden has strong prospects of taking this one with one of her two low-draw runners, Stackattack and URBIS ACCORD. The former's poor display last time can be ignored as he plays the mud at Newcastle. The selection, very much the dark horse here, raced on slow ground in the Britannia Stakes at Royal Ascot and looks well handicapped.

3.40: A tricky event and it would be folly to ignore the claims of the veteran, Further Flight, who has retained his form this season. If the rain stays away, however, BETANNA may have too much speed at this distance.

4.15: There has been considerable confidence in the ante-post market behind Pasternak and Romi, but there would seem to be no value in taking the short prices available this

HYPERION

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JOHN SMITH'S MAGNET CUP - 10 YEAR-OLD

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YORK

2.00 Martin's Ring
2.35 Tracking
3.10 Irish Accord
3.40 ENAMOR (nap)

4.15 Secret Aly
4.45 Bayin
5.15 Socket Set

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places).

STALLS: 1st & 2nd - 1st & 2nd; 3rd - 1st & 2nd; 4th - 1st & 2nd; 5th - 1st & 2nd; 6th - 1st & 2nd; 7th - 1st & 2nd; 8th - 1st & 2nd; 9th - 1st & 2nd; 10th - 1st & 2nd; 11th - 1st & 2nd; 12th - 1st & 2nd; 13th - 1st & 2nd; 14th - 1st & 2nd; 15th - 1st & 2nd; 16th - 1st & 2nd; 17th - 1st & 2nd; 18th - 1st & 2nd; 19th - 1st & 2nd; 20th - 1st & 2nd; 21st - 1st & 2nd; 22nd - 1st & 2nd; 23rd - 1st & 2nd; 24th - 1st & 2nd; 25th - 1st & 2nd; 26th - 1st & 2nd; 27th - 1st & 2nd; 28th - 1st & 2nd; 29th - 1st & 2nd; 30th - 1st & 2nd; 31st - 1st & 2nd; 32nd - 1st & 2nd; 33rd - 1st & 2nd; 34th - 1st & 2nd; 35th - 1st & 2nd; 36th - 1st & 2nd; 37th - 1st & 2nd; 38th - 1st & 2nd; 39th - 1st & 2nd; 40th - 1st & 2nd; 41st - 1st & 2nd; 42nd - 1st & 2nd; 43rd - 1st & 2nd; 44th - 1st & 2nd; 45th - 1st & 2nd; 46th - 1st & 2nd; 47th - 1st & 2nd; 48th - 1st & 2nd; 49th - 1st & 2nd; 50th - 1st & 2nd; 51st - 1st & 2nd; 52nd - 1st & 2nd; 53rd - 1st & 2nd; 54th - 1st & 2nd; 55th - 1st & 2nd; 56th - 1st & 2nd; 57th - 1st & 2nd; 58th - 1st & 2nd; 59th - 1st & 2nd; 60th - 1st & 2nd; 61st - 1st & 2nd; 62nd - 1st & 2nd; 63rd - 1st & 2nd; 64th - 1st & 2nd; 65th - 1st & 2nd; 66th - 1st & 2nd; 67th - 1st & 2nd; 68th - 1st & 2nd; 69th - 1st & 2nd; 70th - 1st & 2nd; 71st - 1st & 2nd; 72nd - 1st & 2nd; 73rd - 1st & 2nd; 74th - 1st & 2nd; 75th - 1st & 2nd; 76th - 1st & 2nd; 77th - 1st & 2nd; 78th - 1st & 2nd; 79th - 1st & 2nd; 80th - 1st & 2nd; 81st - 1st & 2nd; 82nd - 1st & 2nd; 83rd - 1st & 2nd; 84th - 1st & 2nd; 85th - 1st & 2nd; 86th - 1st & 2nd; 87th - 1st & 2nd; 88th - 1st & 2nd; 89th - 1st & 2nd; 90th - 1st & 2nd; 91st - 1st & 2nd; 92nd - 1st & 2nd; 93rd - 1st & 2nd; 94th - 1st & 2nd; 95th - 1st & 2nd; 96th - 1st & 2nd; 97th - 1st & 2nd; 98th - 1st & 2nd; 99th - 1st & 2nd; 100th - 1st & 2nd; 101st - 1st & 2nd; 102nd - 1st & 2nd; 103rd - 1st & 2nd; 104th - 1st & 2nd; 105th - 1st & 2nd; 106th - 1st & 2nd; 107th - 1st & 2nd; 108th - 1st & 2nd; 109th - 1st & 2nd; 110th - 1st & 2nd; 111th - 1st & 2nd; 112th - 1st & 2nd; 113th - 1st & 2nd; 114th - 1st & 2nd; 115th - 1st & 2nd; 116th - 1st & 2nd; 117th - 1st & 2nd; 118th - 1st & 2nd; 119th - 1st & 2nd; 120th - 1st & 2nd; 121st - 1st & 2nd; 122nd - 1st & 2nd; 123rd - 1st & 2nd; 124th - 1st & 2nd; 125th - 1st & 2nd; 126th - 1st & 2nd; 127th - 1st & 2nd; 128th - 1st & 2nd; 129th - 1st & 2nd; 130th - 1st & 2nd; 131st - 1st & 2nd; 132nd - 1st & 2nd; 133rd - 1st & 2nd; 134th - 1st & 2nd; 135th - 1st & 2nd; 136th - 1st & 2nd; 137th - 1st & 2nd; 138th - 1st & 2nd; 139th - 1st & 2nd; 140th - 1st & 2nd; 141st - 1st & 2nd; 142nd - 1st & 2nd; 143rd - 1st & 2nd; 144th - 1st & 2nd; 145th - 1st & 2nd; 146th - 1st & 2nd; 147th - 1st & 2nd; 148th - 1st & 2nd; 149th - 1st & 2nd; 150th - 1st & 2nd; 151st - 1st & 2nd; 152nd - 1st & 2nd; 153rd - 1st & 2nd; 154th - 1st & 2nd; 155th - 1st & 2nd; 156th - 1st & 2nd; 157th - 1st & 2nd; 158th - 1st & 2nd; 159th - 1st & 2nd; 160th - 1st & 2nd; 161st - 1st & 2nd; 162nd - 1st & 2nd; 163rd - 1st & 2nd; 164th - 1st & 2nd; 165th - 1st & 2nd; 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Aussies brand Rowell row a 'disgrace'

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWETT
reports from Sydney

The Rugby Football Union hierarchy's astonishing ability to make the worst of a bad job plumed previously unfathomable depths here yesterday as the rumpus over Jack Rowell's future as national coach continued to overshadow the small matter of today's one-off Test between Australia and England.

Rowell could not have received more sympathy had he plumed the New South Wales branch of the Samaritans. Meanwhile, his hapless employers were forced to soak up a torrent of stick, much of it dished out by the Wallabies.

Greg Smith, the Australian coach and Rowell's direct

opponent at the Sydney Football Ground, was almost incandescent with anger at the way his rival's position had been undermined over the last few days. "It's a disgrace, an absolute disgrace," he said. "I just don't understand the mentality of some people. There is no morality here. If they've sent Jack here to do a job they should let him do it, but people have their own agendas and push things all the time. It sort of makes me sick."

Rowell also received a private vote of support from his players, many of whom were surprised and angered at news that Don Rutherford, the RFU's technical director, had spent several hours in New Zealand trying to lure Graham Henry, the highly-regarded Auckland provincial coach, with a place in the England set-up.

AUSTRALIA v ENGLAND				
at Sydney Football Ground				
M Byrne	NSW	15	T Stimpson	Newcastle
S June	Queensland	24	J Bentley	Newcastle
J Little	Queensland	23	N Greenstock	Wagga
J Holbeck	ACT	12	P de Gennaro	Bath, Exps
J Roff	ACT	11	M Best	Northampton
T Horan	Queensland	10	M Catt	Bath
G Gregan	ACT	9	M Dawson	Northampton
C Bladder	NSW	8	G Rowlands	Leicester
M Foley	Queensland	7	M Reagan	Leicester
E McKenzie	ACT	6	D Garforth	Leicester
G Morgan	Queensland	4	M Redwood	Bath
J Eadie	Queensland	3	S Shaw	Wagga
D Meiri	NSW	6	L Dallaglio	Wagga
T Collier	ACT	6	L Hodder	Northampton
S Robinson	ACT	7	R Hill	Leicester

Representative: 16 S Larkham (ACT), 37
 M Hardy (NSW), 28 S Payne (NSW), 19 D
 Brown (Queensland), 24 Steele (NSW),
 22 M Cochrane (ACT)

Representative: 16 J Shepherdson (Bath),
 17 A King (Wagga), 18 A Henson (Bath),
 19 B Clark (Northampton), 20 G Rogers
 (Leicester), 21 K Yates (Bath)

Kick-off: 11.00am (Syd Sports 2)

Referee: P O'Brien (New Zealand).

Rutherford denied offering Rowell's post to Henry. "It is wildly inaccurate to suggest

anything of that nature; for a start, I can't see an imminent situation in which a non-English

coach would be given charge of the England team," he said.

Such a step would horrify Geoff Cooke. "I would be appalled if England turned to an overseas coach," the former England manager said. "We can have outside help, but when it comes to coaching the national side I believe it should be an Englishman."

With the Scotsman Ian McGeechan, the Lions coach, and Australian Bob Dwyer, the Leicester director of rugby, also being sounded out, Rowell, whose contract expires at the end of August, has been in a vulnerable position for some time. But the timing of this week's developments, disrupting as they did the build-up to a fearfully difficult game, was as depressing as it was farcical.

Not that the Wallabies, who have never lost to England on

home soil, will be particularly understanding when today's game kicks off under lights in front of a 41,000 sell-out crowd. Humiliated by the All Blacks last weekend, John Eales and his men are acutely aware of the need for a big performance.

"We have to show the people in this country that we are a better side than we looked against New Zealand," said Smith, who expects Tim Horan, the world's best centre in the early Nineties, to underline his potential as an equally influential outside-half.

In the end, Tim will be a

genius of a No 10. He has his deficiencies at the moment but we need a stand-off who can beat teams from that position. He has the speed and running skills to do that."

If Horan does indeed blow hot, England may find themselves exposed for pace at the

back. They lost Tony Underwood, their quickest wing, to a torn hip muscle yesterday - Nick Beal of Northampton steps up for his second cap - and with Jeremy Guscott back home in Bath, the midfield also has the stamp of inexperience about it.

England have never beaten the Wallabies on Australian soil and given the brutal rigours of a seven-week Lions tour involving all but three of their starting line-up, today's assignment would have been daunting without the pantomime surrounding their coach's job. Under these embarrassing and entirely avoidable circumstances, victory would be nothing short of miraculous.

Martin Johnson, captain of the Lions in South Africa, has been told it could be six weeks before he plays again after undergoing a groin operation.

Buckett seizes second chance

Ian Buckett, the Swansea prop, has been handed the chance to resume his international career for Wales against the American Eagles in San Francisco today. The former Oxford Blue will win his second full cap three years after his first against Tonga thanks to an ankle injury to his team-mate, Christian Loader.

It is an ironic twist of fortunes for Buckett, who was well established as Swansea's leading loose-head prop before Loader graduated to the senior ranks. However, with that cap against the Tongans in 1994 behind him everything went wrong for the 29-year-old when he severed the hamstring in his left leg in a horrific scrum accident in a club game against Cardiff.

"The injury happened in January 1995 and I couldn't run for eight months. I had to teach myself the basics of running once my leg had been rehabilitated," Buckett said. "It has been a very frustrating few years and it has been difficult to get consistent first-team rugby since Christian got into the Welsh side."

"But I managed to get back into the Swansea side last season and now I intend to make the most of my second chance with Wales."

Buckett is one of three changes from the Wales side which beat the United States 30-20 in last weekend's first Test in Wilmington, North Carolina. All the changes are in the pack.

Buckett takes over from Loader, who will be on his way home this weekend after straining an ankle ligament, and the Llanelli hooker Robin McBryde takes over from Garin Jenkins.

Buckett and McBryde used to pack down together at Swansea and also won their first caps in the win over Tonga three years ago. But the player who joined them among the debutants on that day, Steve Williams, the Neath No 8, has lost his place in the back row to Bath's Nathan Thomas.

Other than that, Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, has kept faith with his senior players. Bowring, however, will be looking for a vast improvement on last weekend's showing, in which Wales scored four tries to two by the Eagles.

"I will be looking for an improvement in attitude and performance from the first Test. I wasn't totally happy with the way things went in Wilmington," Bowring said.

The Eagles are still waiting on a fitness check on the Bath utility forward Dan Lyle.

Wales (v US Eagles, San Francisco, today): K Morgan (Prop); W Proctor (Lock); I Davies (Cardiff); G Thomas (Cardiff); M Walker (Cardiff); A Thomas (Swansea); P John (Pontypridd); I Buckett (Swansea); R McBryde (Llanelli); L Williams (Cardiff); G Lewis (Cardiff); M Voyle (Cardiff); A Gibbs (Llanelli); N Thomas (Bath); J Jones (Cardiff); capt. Replacement: D James (Cardiff); L Lewis (Cardiff); A Moore (Cardiff); S Williams (Swansea); C Roberts (Swansea); G Jenkins (Swansea).

Swansea are set to announce a record loss in excess of £450,000 for the last financial year because of high wage bills and lower than anticipated income. Negotiated contract deals mean players of the calibre of Scott Gibbs, Arwel Thomas and Garin Jenkins will stay at Swansea for the coming season.

The cost of paying their wages, however, was based on the assumption the club would receive a share of the £22m BSkyB television deal that subsequently collapsed.

Dallaglio dares to rise higher in England's cause

Australians do not, as a general rule, fall over each other in a mad rush to heap praise on sporting opponents. Least of all the snooty English, for whom they reserve a particularly vitriolic strain of public contempt bordering on the abusive.

Listen, then, to Greg Smith, a straight-talking rugby coach from straight-talking Sydney and as hard a nut as ever took charge of the Wallaby national side. "The England back row is a very, very powerful attacking unit - big, strong, fast and damaging - and given a decent platform, they are people you would have to fear."

Could you just run that past us again, Greg? We're used to having sweet nothings whispered in our ears by hairy-chested, muscle-flexing Aussies with a Test to win.

Actually, Smith was being deadly serious as he extolled the virtues of Tim Rodber, Richard Hill and Lawrence Dallaglio in advance of today's inaugural Cook Cup match at the Sydney Football Ground. And with good reason, too. The English looseies were central to the Lions' unexpected triumph in South Africa and in the light of those deeply committed performances against the feared Bokke trio of Ruben Kruger, Andre Venier and Gary Teichmann, the Wallaby tacticians have reshaped their own back row in an effort to draw the sting from the red rose breakaways.

That will be easier said than done, especially with Dallaglio in such astonishing form. At 24, the Wasp captain is in such complete command of his game that the Lions selectors felt able to switch him from the blind-side flank to No 8 just hours before last weekend's Johannesburg Test, secure in the knowledge that he would deliver in world-class style.

"He really is an incredibly influential player," enthused Fran Cotton, the Lions manager, after the dust had settled on the Ellis Park hostilities. "I can't tell you how impressed I've been with him."

Even the Wallabies fear the back-row behemoth, writes Chris Hewett

Jack Rowell is equally smitten. "When he arrived at our Sydney hotel, I congratulated him on his success with the Lions," the England coach said yesterday. "And what was his response? 'There's one game left to go. Jack. Let's get down to business.' That is the mark of the man." Talent, versatility and an ultra-professional willingness to play all the year round. Almost too good to be true, surely?

In fact, Dallaglio is just beginning to feel the strain of an exhausting 11-month crusade along every last highway and byway of the rugby landscape. "The players who have been

"We all played differently and embraced a new philosophy during the tour"

heavily involved at international level this summer are going to have to take a well-earned rest and if that means missing the first couple of matches of the new season, so be it. You can't continue at this pace indefinitely, so it would be better to recharge the batteries now than to find yourself hitting a brick wall halfway through next season because of injury or fatigue."

For all that, Dallaglio is still enjoying the view from the greatest rugby high of his career to date. Four years ago, Ben Clarke, his predecessor as England's short-side specialist, completed his first Lions tour with a reputation to die for and Dallaglio has passed the hardest examination rugby has to offer with the self-same flying

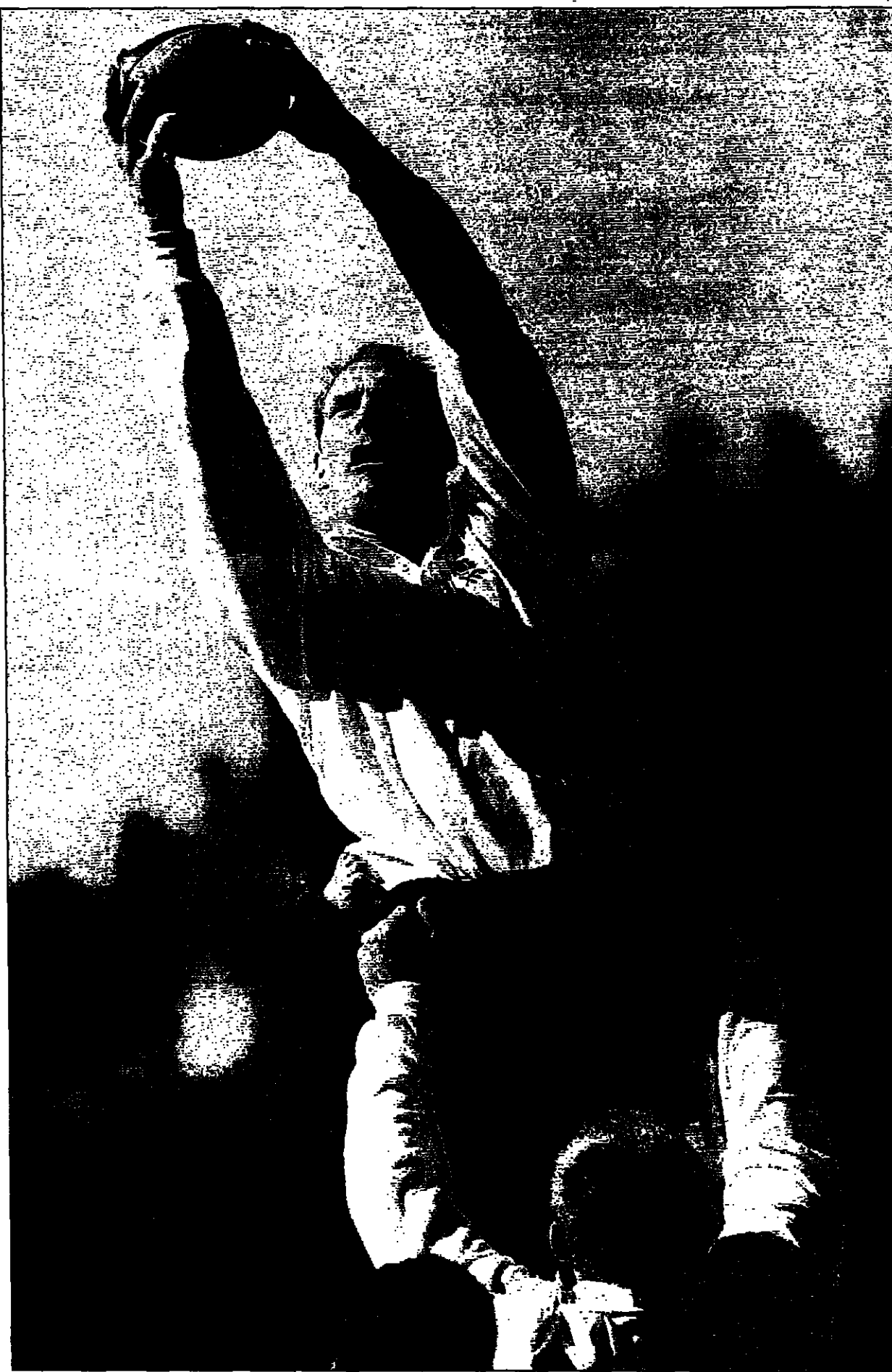
colours. What is more, he has emerged with his natural enthusiasm for the fray intensified still further by the expansive, exciting style adopted in South Africa.

"I think we all played differently and embraced a whole new philosophy during the course of the tour. In many ways, we had to be prepared to do that; rugby is refereed differently in the southern hemisphere and as a result, positive play tends to be rewarded. A side going forward has every chance of being allowed to retain possession, so you learn to treasure the ball."

"We have to translate that experience directly to today's game against Australia and there are enough England players who underwent the Lions experience to enable that to happen, because it's in the mindset now and has been for some weeks."

"People ask if there is an end-of-season feel about this fixture after all the emotion and elation of the Lions' victory, but I think this is a very important opportunity for all of us to lay down some markers for next season. We're all aware now that England have an ever-increasing pool of players capable of stepping up to Test level and no one can afford a bad run if they want to stay involved."

There is no doubting Dallaglio's involvement, however. He will lead Wasps again next season as the Londoners defend their league title and a good deal of smart money says he will skipper his country too before very much longer. Phil de Glanville is a sufficiently competitive character to make that assumption a matter of prolonged dispute but with Will Greenwood, Jeremy Guscott and Nick Greenstock likely to create a midfield log jam every bit as congested as last year's snarl-up, it would be no surprise to see Rowell or whoever might succeed him hand the reins to an automatic choice. Just at the moment, they do not come any more automatic than Lawrence Bruno Nero Dallaglio.



On a high: Victory on the field for the Lions proved Lawrence Dallaglio's immense value to England

Photograph: AFP

SPORTING DIGEST

Worthing fight for survival

Basketball

Worthing Bears will fold next week unless supporters of the ailing Budweiser League club can raise £30,000.

Directors of the three-times Wembley Championship play-off winners are backing the fans' initiative, which seeks six pledges of £5,000 each from local business or individuals.

Any pledge of that sum would be invited to form a management committee headed by one of the club's directors.

In return, Worthing directors would not sell the club, commit

to keep it in Worthing and endeavour to find a competitive team this coming season.

A spokesman for the supporters, Christian Hamilton, said that fans had to try and explore every avenue in an attempt to save the club, and if the required sum is not raised in a week all pledges will be returned. He said: "This appeal may be the last chance."

Bears have operated in Worthing for 10 years and are locked in a desperate fight for survival following Worthing Borough Council's decision to refuse them financial support.

Oliver flies to first defence

Boxing

It could be a case of out with the old and in with the new tonight when Spencer Oliver and Herol Graham appear on the same mammoth bill London's at Kensington Olympia.

Oliver, 22, tops the promotion with the first defence of his European super-bantamweight championship against the Frenchman Serge Poilhan.

The Flinchley boxer has made such a rapid rise since defeating the Bulgarian champion Martin

Krastev in four rounds to take the title in May, and can look forward to becoming one of the domestic game's biggest draws.

However, Graham, 37, on a comeback despite protestations from friends, could be lacking in his glories for the final time. The Sheffield boxer, who came close to claiming versions of the world middleweight title in 1989 and 1990, fights the world-class Canadian Chris Johnson for the vacant World Boxing Council International super-middleweight belt.

Athletics

AMERICAN UNDER-22 CHAMPIONSHIPS (Tulsa, Pa, Thurs): British performance areas 300m semi-finals: J. Henderson 39.25; 100m: J. Henderson 13.25; 200m: M. Hyatt 47.05; 400m: J. Henderson 1:54.75; 800m: J. Henderson 4:05.75; 1,600m: J. Henderson 8:11.75; 3,200m: J. Henderson 16:23.75; 6,400m: J. Henderson 32:47.75; 12,800m: J. Henderson 64:55.75; 25,600m: J. Henderson 1:29:55.75; 51,200m: J. Henderson 2:59:55.75; 102,400m: J. Henderson 5:59:55.75; 204,800m: J. Henderson 11:59:55.75; 409,600m: J. Henderson 23:59:55.75; 819,200m: J. Henderson 47:59:55.75; 1,638,400m: J. Henderson 95:59:55.75; 3,276,800m: J. Henderson 191:59:55.75; 6,553,600m: J. Henderson 383:59:55.75; 13,107,200m: J. Henderson 767:59:55.75; 26,214,400m: J. Henderson 1535:59:55.75; 52,428,800m: J. Henderson 3071:59:55.75; 104,857,600m: J. Henderson 6143:59:55.75; 209,715,200m: J. Henderson 12287:59:55.75; 419,430,400m: J. Henderson 24574:59:55.75; 838,860,800m: J. Henderson 49148:59:55.75; 1,677,721,600m: J. Henderson 98296:59:55.75; 3,355,443,200m: J. Henderson 196592:59:55.75; 6,710,886,400m: J. Henderson 393184:59:55.75; 13,421,772,800m: J. Henderson 786368:59:55.75; 26,843,545,600m: J. Henderson 1572736:59:55.75; 53,687,091,200m: J. Henderson 3145472:59:55.75; 107,374,182,400m: J. Henderson 6290944:59:55.75; 214,748,364,800m: J. Henderson 12581888:59:55.75; 429,496,729,600m: J. Henderson 25163776:59:55.75; 858,993,459,200m: J. Henderson 50327552:59:55.75; 1,717,986,918,400m: J. Henderson 100655104:59:55.75; 3,435,973,836,800m: J. Henderson 201310208:59:55.75; 6,871,947,673,600m: J. Henderson 402620416:59:55.75; 13,743,895,347,200m: J. Henderson 805240832:59:55.75; 27,487,790,694,400m: J. Henderson 1610481664:59:55.75; 54,975,581,388,800m: J. Henderson 3220963328:59:55.75; 109,951,162,777,600m: J. Henderson 6441926656:59:55.75; 219,902,325,555,200m: J. Henderson 12883853312:59:55.75; 439,804,651,110,400m: J. Henderson 25767706624:59:55.75; 879,609,302,220,800m: J. Henderson 51535413248:59:55.75; 1,759,218,604,441,600m: J. Henderson 103070826496:59:55.75; 3,518,437,208,883,200m: J. Henderson 206141652992:59:55.75; 7,036,874,417,766,400m: J. Henderson 412283305984:59:55.75; 14,073,748,835,532,800m: J. Henderson 824566611968:59:55.75; 28,147,497,671,065,600m: J. Henderson 1649133223936:59:55.75; 56,294,995,342,131,200m: J. Henderson 3298266447872:59:55.75; 112,589,990,684,262,400m: J. Henderson 6596532895744:59:55.75; 225,179,981,368,524,800m: J. Henderson 13193065791488:59:55.75; 450,359,962,737,049,600m: J. Henderson 26386131582976:59:55.75; 900,719,925,474,099,200m: J. Henderson 52772263165952:59:55.75; 1,801,439,850,948,198,400m: J. Henderson 105544526331904:59:55.75; 3,602,879,701,896,396,800m: J. Henderson 211089052663808:59:55.75; 7,205,759,403,792,793,600m: J. Henderson 422178105327616:59:55.75; 14,411,518,807,585,587,200m: J. Henderson 844356210655232:59:55.75; 28,823,037,615,171,174,400m: J. Henderson 1688712421310464:59:55.75; 57,646,075,230,342,348,800m: J. Henderson 3377424842620928:59:55.75; 115,292,150,460,684,697,600m: J. Henderson 6754849685241856:59:55.75; 230,584,300,921,369,395,200m: J. Henderson 13509699370483712:59:55.75; 461,168,601,842,738,790,400m: J. Henderson 27019398740967424:59:55.75; 922,337,203,685,477,580,800m: J. Henderson 54038797481934848:59:55.75; 1,844,674,407,370,955,161,600m: J. Henderson 108077594963869696:59:55.75; 3,689,348,814,741,910,323,200m: J. Henderson 216155189927739392:59:55.75; 7,378,697,629,483,820,646,400m: J. Henderson 432310379855478784:59:55.75; 14,757,395,258,967,641,292,800m: J. Henderson 864620759710957568:59:55.75; 29,514,790,517,935,282,585,600m: J. Henderson 1729241519421915136:59:55.75; 59,029,581,035,870,565,171,200m: J. Henderson 3458483038843830272:59:55.75; 118,059,162,071,741,130,342,400m: J. Henderson 6916966077687660544:59:55.75; 236,118,324,143,482,260,684,800m: J. Henderson 13833932155375321088:59:55.75; 472,236,648,286,964,521,369,600m: J. Henderson 27667864310750642176:59:55.75; 944,473,296,573,929,042,739,200m: J. Henderson 55335728621501284352:59:55.75; 1,888,946,593,147,858,085,478,400m: J. Henderson 110671457243002568704:59:55.75; 3,777,893,186,295,717,736,956,800m: J. Henderson 2213429144860051374144:59:55.75; 7,555,786,372,591,435,473,913,600m: J. Henderson 4426858289720102748288:59:55.75; 15,111,572,745,182,870,947,827,200m: J. Henderson 8853716579440205496576:59:55.75; 30,223,145,490,365,741,891,674,400m: J. Henderson 17707433158880410993152:59:55.75; 60,446,290,980,731,483,783,748,800m: J. Henderson 35414866317760821986304:59:55.75; 120,892,581,961,462,967,567,497,600m: J. Henderson 70829732635521643972608:59:55.75; 241,785,163,922,925,935,134,995,200m: J. Henderson 141659465271043287845216:59:55.75; 483,570,327,845,851,870,269,990,400m: J. Henderson 283318930542086575690432:59:55.75; 967,140,655,691,703,741,739,980,800m: J. Henderson 566637861084173151380864:59:55.75; 1,934,281,311,383,407,483,479,961,600m: J. Henderson 1133275722168346302761728:59:55.75; 3,868,562,622,766,814,966,959,923,200m: J. Henderson 2266551444336692605523456:59:55.75; 7,737,125,245,533,629,933,919,846,400m: J. Henderson 4533102888673385211046912:59:55.75; 15,474,250,491,067,259,867,839,692,800m: J. Henderson 9066205777346770422093824:59:55.75; 30,948,500,982,134,517,717,675,759,385,600m: J. Henderson 18132411554693540844187648:59:55.75; 61,897,001,964,269,035,435,351,519,771,200m: J. Henderson 36264823109387081688375296:59:55.75; 123,794,003,928,538,070,870,703,039,542,400m: J. Henderson 72529646218774163376750592:59:55.75; 247,588,007,857,076,141,741,406,078,084,800m: J. Henderson 145059292437548326753501184:59:55.75; 495,176,015,714,152,283,483,212,156,169,769,600m: J. Henderson 290118584875096653507002368:59:55.75; 990,352,031,428,304,566,966,424,312,339,539,539,200m: J. 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Strang days indeed
Kent's leg-spinner talks to
Derek Pringle, page 28

sport

Troon test
Tiger Woods ready for
links challenge, page 23

BRITISH GRAND PRIX Williams supports troubled world champion while Hakkinen sets pace for McLaren-Mercedes in practice

Hill fights back with help from friends

Motor racing

DERICK ALLSOP
reports from Silverstone

Damon Hill embarked upon a restoration job on his reputation here yesterday, aided by some of Formula One's most distinguished figures.

As Hill responded to criticism from his boss at Arrows, Yamaha, Tom Walkinshaw, of his motivation and level of performance, Frank Williams, the man who sacked him last year, Bernard Dudot, the technical director of Renault, and John Barnard, his team's new designer, all spoke in support of the world champion.

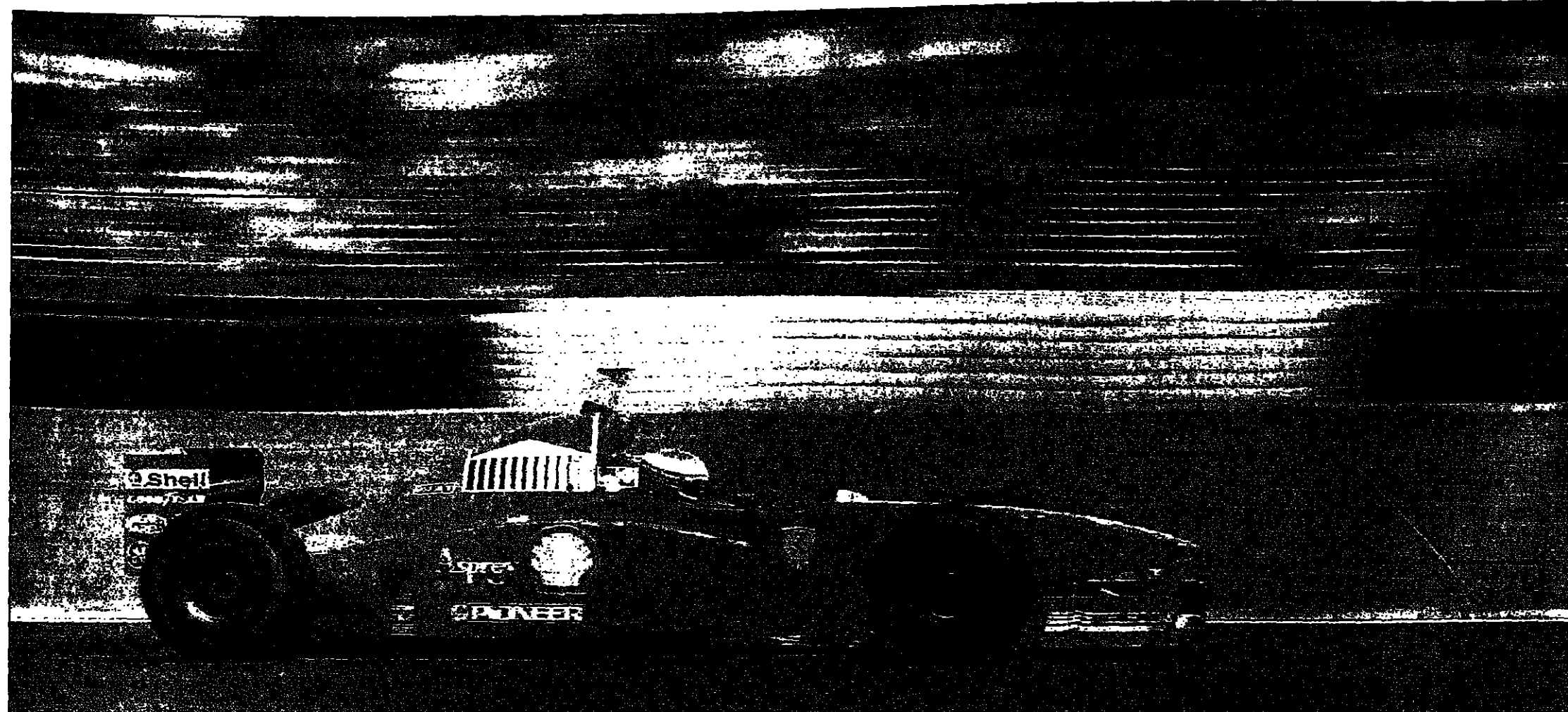
Even Walkinshaw attempted to lift some of the tension he effectively created in the build-up to tomorrow's British Grand Prix by maintaining he had never said Hill was under threat of the axe.

He declared Hill had a future with the team and that he understood his No 1 driver wanted to stay. He did, however, repeat his demand that Hill produce the form "he is capable of."

Walkinshaw had, of course, achieved his objective. He had given Hill a public boost up the backside, the driver's pride had been suitably dented, and the rest of the team doubtless felt some of the blame for a miserable season had been lifted from their shoulders.

The immediate effect was inauspicious. Hill could manage only 20th place in practice, one behind his team-mate, Pedro Diniz.

Hill admitted he was "disappointed" to read Walkinshaw's comments but dismissed suggestions he had already agreed a deal with another team for next year. He said: "It's been a difficult year for Tom, as well as me, and sometimes the frustration is evident not only in the driver but also the team manager. We've got to do all we can to rectify the situation. But there's no problem between us. Tom is entitled to put a rocket



Horse power: Eddie Irvine guides his Ferrari towards the ninth-fastest time in yesterday's first day of practice for Sunday's British Grand Prix at Silverstone

Photograph: Robert Hallam

up the backside of his drivers - every team manager does that. I've had much worse criticism from other team managers.

"My goal is to get back in the hunt for the world championship as soon as possible and I'd like it to be with Arrows if they can offer me the right package."

"I am giving it everything I can. I'm a professional and when I get in the car I want to give my best performance. I don't want to let anyone down, least of all myself."

"You have to drive yourself on and make the best of your

capabilities. The extra motivation factor comes from being at the front. You can't fabricate it, you can't just sit there and pretend you are at the front."

"Money is not an issue. I want to win. I don't want to be 15th or 10th or even sixth. I want to be first. That's what makes me go, get fired up and want to race. I have given the team as much input and energy as I can. You can't do more than so much. The rest is how much you can get out of the car and engine. We are in this together as a team and it's up to us to get the best out of it."

Williams, who reportedly called Hill "a prat" after he collided with Michael Schumacher here two years ago, had a more glowing description for his former driver yesterday.

He said: "Clearly he is struggling with his car but we know he is a world champion, he's won 21 races, and that's all you need to say. It's probable there will not be a place for him back in our team next year, but certainly it is possible for the future. He's a great driver."

Dudot, who produces the engines for his cars, that Hill should have been retained and that had he been, they would be leading the championship rather than trailing Schumacher and Ferrari.

Williams did, however, have a dig back at Jacques Villeneuve, his main hope for the drivers' title, for suggesting the team had become complacent after a strong start to the season and concentrated too much on next year's car.

A third vote of confidence for Hill came from Barnard, who

joined Arrows early this year after leaving Ferrari.

Barnard, who admitted he could do little to this year's Arrows than concentrate on safety improvements, said he had found Hill good to work with and felt this "friction" in the camp did not help the cause.

He went on: "It's difficult enough when you are struggling at the back, but this hasn't affected my relationship with Damon."

Arrows will not be involved in the main event tomorrow, but McLaren-Mercedes may be.

Mika Hakkinen followed up his promising test here with a fastest time in practice yesterday.

Villeneuve, who needs to put his campaign back on track, was second and Heinz-Harald Frentzen, in the other Williams, was third. Schumacher, who leads the drivers' championship by 14 points, was a puzzled seventh.

Johnny Herbert was the best of the home contingent, fourth in Sauber Petronas. Eddie Irvine, in the other Ferrari, was ninth and David Coulthard 13th after spinning his McLaren.

BRITISH GRAND PRIX Practice times (left) for two unofficial sessions: 1.10 Hakkinen (McLaren-Mercedes) 1:27.335; 2. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.356; 3. H-H Frentzen (Williams) 1:27.357; 4. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.358; 5. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.359; 6. G. Frentzen (Williams) 1:27.360; 7. M. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.361; 8. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.362; 9. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.363; 10. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.364; 11. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.365; 12. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.366; 13. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.367; 14. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.368; 15. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.369; 16. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.370; 17. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.371; 18. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.372; 19. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.373; 20. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.374; 21. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.375; 22. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.376; 23. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.377; 24. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.378; 25. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.379; 26. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.380; 27. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.381; 28. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.382; 29. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.383; 30. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.384; 31. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.385; 32. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.386; 33. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.387; 34. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.388; 35. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.389; 36. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.390; 37. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.391; 38. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.392; 39. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.393; 40. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.394; 41. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.395; 42. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.396; 43. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.397; 44. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.398; 45. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.399; 46. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.400; 47. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.401; 48. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.402; 49. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.403; 50. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.404; 51. J. 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Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.557; 204. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.558; 205. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.559; 206. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.560; 207. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.561; 208. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.562; 209. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.563; 210. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.564; 211. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.565; 212. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.566; 213. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.567; 214. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.568; 215. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.569; 216. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.570; 217. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.571; 218. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.572; 219. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.573; 220. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.574; 221. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.575; 222. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.576; 223. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.577; 224. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.578; 225. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.579; 226. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.580; 227. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.581; 228. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.582; 229. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.583; 230. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.584; 231. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.585; 232. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.586; 233. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.587; 234. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.588; 235. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.589; 236. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.590; 237. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.591; 238. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.592; 239. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.593; 240. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.594; 241. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.595; 242. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.596; 243. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.597; 244. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.598; 245. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.599; 246. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.600; 247. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.601; 248. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.602; 249. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.603; 250. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.604; 251. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.605; 252. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.606; 253. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.607; 254. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.608; 255. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.609; 256. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.610; 257. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.611; 258. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.612; 259. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.613; 260. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.614; 261. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.615; 262. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.616; 263. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.617; 264. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.618; 265. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.619; 266. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.620; 267. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.621; 268. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.622; 269. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.623; 270. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.624; 271. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.625; 272. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.626; 273. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.627; 274. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.628; 275. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.629; 276. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.630; 277. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.631; 278. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.632; 279. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.633; 280. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.634; 281. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.635; 282. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.636; 283. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.637; 284. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.638; 285. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.639; 286. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.640; 287. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.641; 288. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.642; 289. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.643; 290. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.644; 291. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.645; 292. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.646; 293. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.647; 294. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.648; 295. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.649; 296. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.650; 297. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.651; 298. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.652; 299. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.653; 300. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.654; 301. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.655; 302. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.656; 303. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.657; 304. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.658; 305. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.659; 306. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.660; 307. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.661; 308. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.662; 309. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.663; 310. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.664; 311. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.665; 312. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.666; 313. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.667; 314. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.668; 315. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.669; 316. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.670; 317. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.671; 318. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.672; 319. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.673; 320. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.674; 321. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.675; 322. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.676; 323. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.677; 324. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.678; 325. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.679; 326. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.680; 327. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.681; 328. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.682; 329. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.683; 330. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.684; 331. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.685; 332. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.686; 333. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.687; 334. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.688; 335. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.689; 336. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.690; 337. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.691; 338. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.692; 339. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.693; 340. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.694; 341. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.695; 342. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.696; 343. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.697; 344. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.698; 345. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.699; 346. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.700; 347. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.701; 348. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.702; 349. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.703; 350. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.704; 351. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.705; 352. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.706; 353. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.707; 354. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.708; 355. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.709; 356. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.710; 357. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.711; 358. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.712; 359. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.713; 360. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.714; 361. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.715; 362. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.716; 363. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.717; 364. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.718; 365. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.719; 366. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.720; 367. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.721; 368. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.722; 369. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.723; 370. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.724; 371. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.725; 372. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.726; 373. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.727; 374. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.728; 375. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.729; 376. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.730; 377. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.731; 378. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.732; 379. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.733; 380. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.734; 381. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.735; 382. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.736; 383. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.737; 384. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.738; 385. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.739; 386. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.740; 387. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.741; 388. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.742; 389. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.743; 390. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.744; 391. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.745; 392. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.746; 393. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.747; 394. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.748; 395. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.749; 396. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.750; 397. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.751; 398. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.752; 399. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.753; 400. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.754; 401. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.755; 402. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.756; 403. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.757; 404. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.758; 405. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.759; 406. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.760; 407. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.761; 408. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.762; 409. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.763; 410. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.764; 411. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.765; 412. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.766; 413. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.767; 414. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.768; 415. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.769; 416. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.770; 417. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.771; 418. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.772; 419. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.773; 420. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.774; 421. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.775; 422. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.776; 423. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.777; 424. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.778; 425. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.779; 426. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.780; 427. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.781; 428. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.782; 429. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.783; 430. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.784; 431. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.785; 432. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.786; 433. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.787; 434. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.788; 435. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.789; 436. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.790; 437. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.791; 438. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.792; 439. J. Schumacher (Ferrari) 1:27.793; 440. J. Villeneuve (Williams) 1:27.794; 441. J. Herbert (Williams) 1:27.795; 442. J. Schumacher (Ferrari

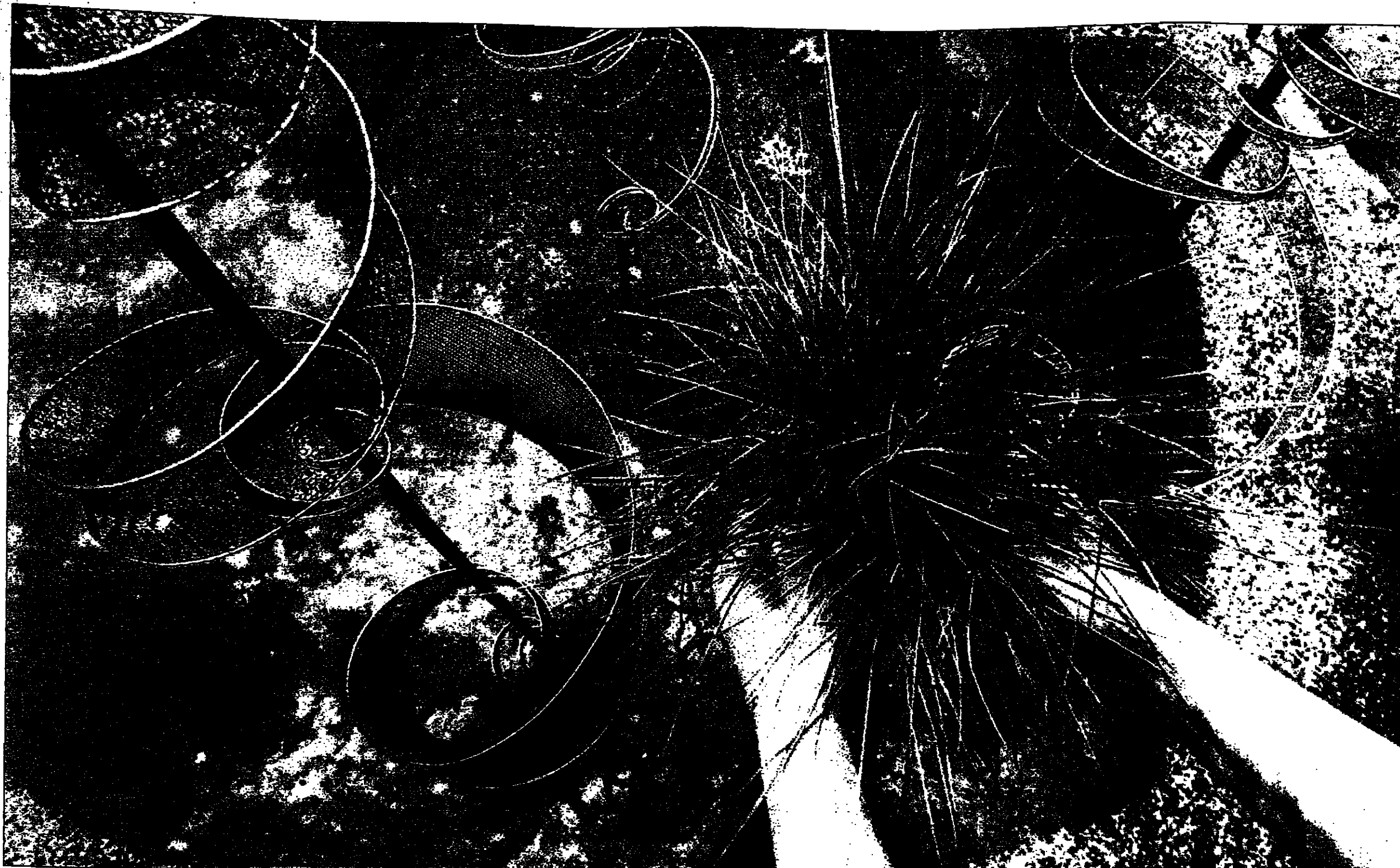


IMAGE OF THE WEEK Hands on at the Hampton Court Flower Show: the finishing touches are added to a detail of Bonita Bulaitis' landscape design Voyage of Vitality, which presents the garden as 'a living natural art space'. Photograph by Nicola Kurtz. Taken on a Nikon F4 with a 24mm lens at 1/125 seconds at f8 on Kodak 400 ASA film. To order a print of this picture - at a cost of £15 - phone 0171-293 2534



the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 12 JULY 1997

WORDS OF THE WEEK

Taking the mickey out of France

As the French prepare to celebrate the storming of the Bastille, Nick Middleton's new book takes a wry look at another corner of France that has also been stormed and conquered - by a mouse.

Once you're inside, the first thing that strikes you about Disneyland Paris is that you are no longer in France, because nowhere in France could be so pink. The mock Southern-belle-style buildings along Main Street, USA, are all a ghastly shade of sickly lobster, and even the pavements are pink. But it's clean and it's bright and it's happy because you've entered a fantasy film set where there is no litter or graffiti; where all the cast members are slim and use deodorant. The females all wear appropriate underwear (or so I'm told) and the males are clean-shaven with short hair and no visible tattoos. It is the Disney Corporation's idea of what the world ought to be like, and after just a few hours inside the compound you begin to understand why the US produces so many homicidal maniacs.

So I spent my first day in Continental Europe wandering the plastic, alcohol-free world of make-believe, forever dodging in and out of somebody's video shot, marvelling at the imitation rock formations in concrete and reinforced polystyrene, admiring the topiary animals and the larger than life Disney characters signing autographs for their spellbound junior admirers. Besides Main Street, USA, there are four other "lands", each with its own attractions, entertainment, restaurants and shops. Everything is themed, so that on Main Street, USA, the cast members were kitted out in grey capes and turn-of-the-

'Everything was themed, and it came as a minor relief to note that the sparrows did not fly in wearing Dumbo outfits. Everything, that is, except the toilets. This was a disappointment.'

century small-town American gear, while tan-coloured Indiana Jones outfits were standard issue in Adventureland. (Sadly, pedal-powered onion sellers were conspicuous by their absence.) Old-style riverboats plied the waters of Frontierland; you could take a trip aboard a flying galleon in Fantasyland, and be piloted through the galaxy by delinquent robots in Discoveryland.

And, of course, the renowned mouse partnership was available in appropriate settings to guide you through a bewildering variety of retail entertainment. Inside the realistic Western General Store, Trading Post and Mining Supplies outlet, Minnie modelled the latest in fetching, imitation-leather squaw gear, sporting a single feather in her headband. And then, as if by magic, there she was again in veil and harem trousers to introduce you to her Scheherazade Collection inside the Adventureland Bazaar, while Mickey looked on, count-

ing your money from beneath a fez set at a jaunty angle.

Yes indeed, everything within Disneyland's control was themed, and it came as a minor relief to note that the sparrows did not fly in wearing Dumbo outfits. Everything, that is, except the toilets, because once you've passed the symbol of a man wearing a scrape in Frontierland you could be in the same restroom as the one that lies behind the man in the fez in the Adventureland bazaar (I tell a lie; they resisted the temptation to be culturally offensive in the bazaar: there was no fez). This was a disappointment, and an opportunity missed, I thought. I wanted to be overpowered by a wall of urinal stench as I passed that serape symbol, and piss in a real Mexican toilet surrounded by flies, or squat down over an evil-smelling hole in the ground behind the bazaar next to a cardboard cut-out of a straining

Middle Eastern gentleman. Fantasyland should have been equipped with bathroom fixtures shaped like the Mad Hatter's teacups, while Indiana Jones hats could have served the same purpose in Adventureland, but, like good, clean-cut Americans the Disney Imagineers had stopped at the restroom thresholds.

One thing about the toilets was clear, however. They weren't French. Most French public loos are holes in the ground that you squat over, but this wasn't the sort of behaviour that Disney encouraged. In fact, the more I saw of Euro Disney the more puzzled I became about why it was there at all. Why should the French, so proud and defensive of their national culture, allow this wholesale importation of tacky foreign influence into their hallowed national space? Admittedly, the Disneyland theme park had simply displaced 56 hectares of beetroot fields, but you wouldn't have to be the most xenophobic of Frenchmen to believe that a Gallic beetroot is culturally more valuable than Mickey Mouse and his entourage. The French have even taken the subtle step of changing the park's name, from Euro Disney to Disneyland Paris, in an effort to stamp their identity on the place.

The extraordinary mix of fantasy and reality became disorienting. I wasn't in France, I wasn't in Europe, and I wasn't even really in the US. I also wasn't sure what was real and what was make-believe. Every gust of wind or rustling leaf had me looking for the hidden

motor or secreted fan. Was it a real live horse pulling that streetcar, or an automated replica? I sat down beside a grassy bank near the Lucky Nugget Saloon, twangy Country and Western music emanating from hidden loudspeakers in the flower-bed behind me, to drink a coffee. It felt hot and looked black, and even smelt like real coffee, but when I took my first sip it became clear that this was as far as the resemblance to the real thing extended.

Somehow the suspended reality became sinister and even potentially dangerous. The candyfloss-pink buildings on Main Street looked almost good enough to eat, and may well have been more nourishing than the Maggi fare served up in the Restaurant Hakuna Matata. But it struck me that if you suffered a heart attack in Frontierland, or spontaneously ignited in Adventureland, the only attention you'd receive would be from a dozen dads welding their camcorders and their numerous children showing Disney autograph books up your nose. I suppose at least you would expire on camera, in an instant of fame entirely in keeping with the late 20th-century theme park.

© Nick Middleton. 'Travels as a Brussels Scout' by Nick Middleton (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £17.99) is published on 14 July. Readers of 'The Independent' can buy it for £15.99 (p&p free) by calling Littlehampton Book Services (01903 736736). Quote reference TB.

INSIDE

John Walsh meets Frank McCourt page 3

Summer books for children pages 8 & 9



Travel & outdoors

In the swim: bathing places, from the Crimea to Penzance via Ireland10,11
Pirouette in Paris13
Gardening: the perfect patio17
Country: poetry and petunias in Ledbury18

PLUS

Games, crossword2
Arts, reviews4&5
Books6,7,8,9
All Consuming19,20
Motoring21
Money, property22-28
TV, radio reviews29
Today's TVBack page

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Cavell (on Adam Phillips), John Lanchester (on Fatties), Jacqueline Rose (on Virginia Woolf), James Wood (on D.H. Lawrence), Stephen Sedley (on Law and Public Life), Ian Hacking (on the Idea of Blindness), Ian Hamilton (on the FA Cup), Anne Hollander (on Yves St Laurent) and Hilary Mantel (a story).

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The man who mistook his wife for a rucksack, and other unlikely tales from the backwaters of the world's minor sports, recounted by William Hartston

You need speed, strong legs, and as small a wife as possible, says Jouni Jussila. And he should know. For Mr Jussila, with the help of his 100-lb wife Tiina, has just won the World Championships in Wife-Carrying, for the fifth consecutive time (though the first three were only Finnish titles, before the event went international).

The rules are simple: each contestant must carry a wife – his own, his neighbour's or one from farther afield, as long as she is more than 17 years of age – over the official 253½-metre track, part sand, part grass, part asphalt, including two hurdles and one chest-deep water obstacle. Dropping the wife entails a penalty of 15 seconds. The official rules also state that "each contestant takes care of his (and her) insurance, if one is deemed necessary".

The competition allegedly has its roots in 19th-century history, when Ronkainen, the local brigand, accepted into his troop only those men who proved their worth on a challenge obstacle track. Add to that the common practice of the time of stealing women from neighbouring villages, and you have the entire spirit of the age captured in the wife-carrying championships. In the modern event, there is also a team competition in which the wife is used as a baton in a three-man relay race. An additional rule also specifies the consumption of the official "wife-carrying drink" at each change-over point.

The winner is an oil worker and finished at the head of a field of 27 couples, including a Norwegian weightlifter as well as entrants from Germany and Estonia. The champion's wife confirmed that the woman's role in the event is more than that of a mere burden. "If the woman starts laughing, it's all over," she said. The event always takes place in the town of Sonkajärvi, and the first prize is a loaf of rye bread, a wife-carrying statuette and the woman's weight in beer.

And while you are in Sonkajärvi, do not miss the opportunity of visiting the International Bottle Museum "a fascinating insight into Finland's and other countries' cultural history". The collection comprises around 6,000 bottles from all over the world, including an old Finnish *mahapullo* and *parrunpöytä*, a Chinese acupuncture perfumed mosquito-repellent bottle, and the world's finest collection of milk bottles.

Entries for the Wife-Carrying Championships were slightly down on last year, perhaps because of an unfortunate clash of dates with the World Hot Dog Eating Championships in Coney Island, New York. Until last year, the Americans had dominated the world of competitive hot dog consumption, led by their champion, Ed "The Animal" Krachie. His record of 22 hot dogs in 12 minutes had been considered almost unbeatable, but last year the 330lb, 6ft 7in Krachie was surprisingly defeated by a Japanese



Let slip hot dogs of war



Ed Krachie (above) gracefully concedes defeat to Hirofumi Nakajima at Nathan's hot dog eating contest in Coney Island

Left: Tiina and Jouni Jussila retain their world wife-carrying title

contestant, Hirofumi "The Rabbit" Nakajima, who looked quite unfit for the contest at only 135lb and 5ft 8in.

In this year's contest, the same two started as favourites in a field of 17, with Krachie hoping to regain a title that all true Americans believed to be part of their heritage. When it came to the crunch, however, Krachie fell below his best. He took the lead halfway through the event, but experienced observers knew that he had gone off too fast. After complaining that he "felt like throwing up", he slowed down and was overtaken by two

Japanese contestants. At the end of the specified 12 minutes, Hirofumi Nakajima had retained his title, setting a new world record of 24½ hot dogs, half a hot dog ahead of the runner-up, Kazutomo Arai.

After taking third place, a disappointed Krachie was philosophical about his defeat: "It's not important to me," he said, "but it would have been great to bring it home for America." The Americans will now go away to ponder the secret of the Japanese success. Perhaps it lay in their preferred technique of removing the sausage

from the roll and eating it before consuming the bread. This certainly seemed to lead to better results than the method preferred by many of the Americans of dunking their dogs in water to soften them before consumption. Only one contestant asked for tomato ketchup. He was jeered by his rivals and finished well down the field.

Proudly wearing the winner's rhinestone-studded, mustard-coloured belt, Nakajima, a furniture delivery man from Kofu, revealed what he had done to train for the event. "Nothing,"

he said. But he had previously won the Japanese national eating championships by noshing 15 bowls of noodle soup, 100 pieces of sushi, five plates of wheat noodles, five plates of beef with rice and five plates of curry and rice. His prize this time included a 20-pack take-out order for Nathan's hot dogs.

The importance of technique in such contests was confirmed earlier this month in the first banana-eating competition ever held in Estonia. The winner, Mait Lepik, won the title by consuming 10 bananas in three minutes. His crucial time-saving secret was to eat the skins as well. The rules had specifically forbidden contestants to engage the services of friends to peel the bananas for them, but Lepik realised that there was nothing saying that the bananas had to be peeled at all. Once he had realised that, he romped to victory and the top prize of a trip to the Canary Islands.

More minor sports in brief: Imogene Barnhart, a retired police dispatch rider, won the 10th Annual World Hog Calling Contest in Oklahoma. "I'm a champion hog-caller and husband-caller," she said.

Contestants are limbering up for next month's World Melon Seed Spitting Championships at Le Frechou in south-west France. "You have to use the frisbee technique, spitting out the seed so that it glides," advises the world record holder, Bernard Ricard. And a campaign is planned to have melon seed spitting in the 2004 Olympics.

Games people play

Pandora Melly meets a man who sure plays a mean pinball

Michael Heath, 62, cartoonist

When I'm feeling particularly flat, or faded or drunk, I go to the amusement arcade in Old Compton Street and play pinball. You can take out all your frustrations – Pow! The angrier you are, the better you play.

There aren't many pinball machines left now; it's a dying art. I started playing on the West Pier at Brighton, but in those days, pinball was less complicated. You just sent a ball up and it went donk-donk-donk and hit things and with luck you got some sort of score. Or you'd win 20 cigarettes, or a watch that blew up after three minutes, or fell off, or turned your wrist green.

Nowadays, the machines are enormously technical, and you need a score of 25 billion just to get a free game. They also talk to you, and if you're lonely you can talk back. When you're not doing too well, you'll hear: "Uh-oh!" or "Bad luck, Buddie!" If you get a multi-ball – which is too exciting for words – the machine might say: "OK wise guy, let's go ... Boom!!!" And as the balls go down the wrong hole, you get "Uh-oh, dummy!"

The reason I like pinball is because it's pool-pooed by everybody and is considered down-market. In fact, you have to play with enormous skill. You mustn't move the table, or a sign comes up that says "Tilt", which means you lose the next two balls and have to start again. You must be quite fit to play; if you're under the weather or have flu, you'll soon find out because your reactions will be too slow.

It's quite a balletic game: the old knees go up in the air, and you use plenty of hip action. This could be quite dodgy in Old Compton Street, but fruitcakes don't play pinball.

'Pinball Wizard' recorded by Elton John, first entered the UK charts on 20 March 1976. It remained there for seven weeks, reaching a highest place at number seven.

Go is coming

The British take control of an oriental game

Today, at the Daiwa Foundation in London, a match will begin to decide the 1997 British Go Championship. What makes the occasion unusual is that, for the first time in five years, the British title will be won by a British-born player. For the past four years, the event has been dominated by Shuai Zhang of University College, London. This time he has decided not to compete and the best of five games final will be between Matthew Macfadyen from Leamington Spa and Charles Matthews of Cambridge. Macfadyen, a six-dan player and former European champion, is the favourite.

Since the defeat of Garry Kasparov by Deep Blue, there has been a surge of interest in board games that computers cannot yet play well. The vastness of Go, a game played on a board of 361 squares which the players gradually fill with black and white stones, has made it impervious to the efforts of even the fastest computers. Both chess and Go demand a subtle blend of precise calculation and almost mystical positional judgement, but the balance is tilted far more strongly on the side of judgement in the game of Go. For several years a prize of \$1m has been on offer for the first person to write a Go program that can beat a top-class player. Nothing yet has remotely approached that goal, though good progress has been reported in certain limited types of tactical position.

To judge from the latest issue of the *British Go Journal* – 48 well-produced pages of reports, advice, history, proverbs and news – the game is at last beginning to thrive in this country.

The first game of the British Go Championship will begin at 10.30am today at the Daiwa Foundation, 13-14 Cornwall Terrace, London NW1. The second game will be played at Freud's cafe in Oxford on 27 July. For further information: Adam Atkinson, 01273-297113. The British Go Association may be contacted at 37 Courts Road, Earley, Reading RG6 7DL, or on their Internet site at: www.britgo.demon.co.uk.

The games page is edited by William Hartston

Chess William Hartston

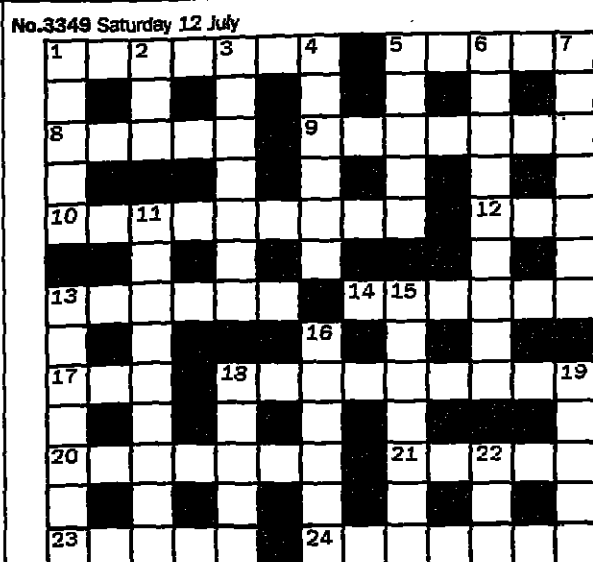
It is one of the great paradoxes of chess that as players get older and wiser it takes them longer and longer to win their games. In his youth, Anatoly Karpov used to open 1.e4, play the sharpest attacking lines and wipe his opponents from the board. Gradually, however, he learnt the incorrectness of such an approach. White's advantage is not sufficient to expect to win by direct attack. The right way to play is to nurture the advantage of the first move, using it to gain a little space, or keep a slight initiative – just enough to apply pressure in the endgame.

One side effect of this perfectionist approach is a large number of draws, but when the wins do come – after 60 or 70 moves usually, they are generally positional gems. Try this game, for example, from the current tournament in Dortmund. White achieves next to nothing from the opening, but when Yusupov fights for a little more space on the Q-side with 18...a5, Karpov sees his chance. The position revolves around what happens to the pawns on d4 and e5. White does not want to play dxe5, which will bring the black knight to a good square. But Black fears that ...cxd4 will be met by Nxd4, with the knight later jumping in to

b5 or c6. After 18...a5, White has another option, which he brings into play with 23.d5! and 27.a4! The result is to leave White with a good K-side majority, while Black's pawns on the Q-side are blocked. The rest, for Karpov, was just technique. At the end 63...Nxe7 64.Kxe7 Kb4 65.Nd2 Kc3 66.Kd6 wins by one move.

White: Anatoly Karpov
Black: Artur Yusupov
1 d4 Nf6 33 f3 Kc7
2 e4 e6 34 Ke2 Qc6
3 Nf3 d5 35 Qc3 Nf6
4 Nc3 Be7 36 Kf2 Kd7
5 Bg5 h6 37 g4 Ke6
6 Bh4 0-0 38 Qe5 Qxe5
7 e3 Ne4 39 Nxc5 Kd5
8 Bxe7 Qxe7 40 Ne4 fxe4
9 Rcl c6 41 Nxb6 Kc6
10 Bd3 Nxc3 42 Ne4 gxf3
11 Rxc3 dxc4 43 Kxf3 Kd5
12 Bxc4 Nd7 44 Nxa5 g5
13 0-0 b6 45 Ne4 h5
14 Bd3 c5 46 Nd2 Ke5
15 Be4 Rb8 47 e4 Ne8
16 Qa4 Bb7 48 Ke3 Ne7
17 Bxb7 Rxb7 49 Ne4+ Kf6
18 Qc2 a5 50 Kf2 Na6
19 a3 Re8 51 Kc3 Nb4
20 Rd1 Rb8 52 h4 Ne5
21 h3 Rhd8 53 a5 Nb4
22 Rcd3 Rcd8 54 Nd2 Ne6
23 d5 cxd5 55 a6 gdx4+
24 Rxd5 Nf6 56 Ksh4 Ke6
25 Rc5 Qe7 57 Ksh5 Kd7
26 Rxe8 Rxe8 58 Kg5 Ke7
27 a4 Rd8 59 Ne4 Kh8
28 Rxd8 Qxd8 60 Kf6 Ka7
29 Ne5 Qd5 61 e5 Kxe6
30 Ne4 Nd7 62 e6 Kh5
31 b3 f5 63 e7 resigns
32 Kf1 Kf7

Concise crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Splitting nucleus of atom (7)
- 5 Vessels (5)
- 8 Low spirits (5)
- 9 Rejects (7)
- 10 Seaside walk (9)
- 12 Regret (3)
- 13 Provokes to action (6)
- 14 Austrian composer (6)
- 17 Friend (3)
- 18 Mountain range (9)
- 20 Mechanic's tool (7)
- 21 Permitted allocation (5)
- 23 Poem (5)
- 24 Precious stone (7)

DOWN

- 2 Disgruntled (3,2)
- 3 Total (3)
- 4 Examine (7)
- 6 European country (6)
- 7 Sword (5)
- 8 Hospital (9)
- 9 Mistake (7)
- 11 Swing (9)
- 13 Deadlock (7)
- 15 Slanted (7)
- 16 Come out (6)
- 18 Convenient (5)
- 19 Burn with hot liquid (5)
- 22 Eggs (3)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Holly, 4 Decamps (Holiday camp), 8 Panama, 9 Relief, 10 First, 11 Omicron, 13 Zang, 15 Laurel, 17 Thrash, 20 Echo, 22 Chapter, 24 Lucan, 26 Antiseptic, 27 Titular, 28 Septic, 29 Ranges, DOWN: 1 Hopeful, 2 Litter, 3 Yungtze, 4 Deacon, 5 Corps, 6 Malanda, 7 Sator, 12 Myth, 14 Allee, 16 Unaware, 18 Holier, 19 Humerus, 21 Crime, 23 Claws, 25 Treat, 26 Colours.

Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South

North
♠ Q 10 7 3
♥ A Q
♦ A J 9 5 2
♣ 8 4
East
♠ 9
♥ 10 9 8 6 4 3
♦ K 4
♣ 7 6 5 2
South
♠ A K J 6 5 2
♥ J
♦ Q 10 8 6
♣ A J

Faced with a choice of finesses in Six Spades on this deal from rubber bridge, South had a problem. If he took the wrong finesse first, it would be too late to try the second. It would have been easy to miss the best psychological play.

South opened 1♠ and North responded 2NT – a conventional bid, agreeing spades, forcing to game, and inviting partner to show a shortage if he was interested in progressing beyond

game. South dutifully bid 3♥ and, although this did not improve North's hand (he would have loved to hear 3♠!) he pushed on with a cue-bid of 4♠. After all, the bidding was still below the game level. South needed no further encouragement and the final contract was 6♠ against which West led the ♠K.

Well, after winning and drawing trumps, would you finesse in hearts or diamonds? In a pairs competition you might be tempted to pin your hopes on the diamonds for, if the finesse wins, you will make an invaluable overtrick.

At rubber bridge, however, the extra 30 points are unimportant. The best bet, after drawing trumps, is to lead the ♠Q from hand at trick four. If West shows no sign of interest (and he might well have had a problem if he had started with the ♠K), go up with dummy's ace and rely on the heart finesse. This play also gives the extra chance of finding East with the singleton ♠K.

Perplexity

"How did you say you remember the number of your favourite Hackney carriage?" Sherlock Holmes asked his companion. "I just remind myself," said Watson, "that I'm twice the man you are, and I recall the laws."

Holmes scribbled on a piece of paper: HOLMES+HOLMES=WATSON. "So if each letter represents a different digit, from 0 to 9, and no word or name may begin with zero, we seek the value of LAWS," he mused.

Can you help him?

A prize of the *Chambers 21st Dictionary* will be awarded to the sender of the first correct answer we open on 24 July. Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

28 June answers:
Laurel & Hardy (heard aurally)
Batman & Robin (rabbit Manon)
Samson & Delilah (nasal delomish)
Winner: Jane Brown (Phymstock)

Backgammon Chris Bray

The tournament season, and in particular the World Championships in Monte Carlo, are upon us, so tournament play will be the theme of our next few articles. Tournament matches, as you probably know, are won by the first to reach a specified number of points. A weekly club tournament will typically be to 7 points while the finals of major tournaments are played to 25 points or more. A newer format is to play the best of five 9-point matches.

When one player reaches match point the next game is played without the doubling cube in use. This is known as the "Crawford Game", named after John Crawford who introduced the rule to reduce some of the bias in favour of the trailing player. This bias occurs because the trailer will double on the first move of each game after his opponent reaches match point. Thus the trailer will win 2 or 4 points on each game and he risks nothing by doubling because if he loses the game he loses the match.

Unlike money play, where each game can be treated on its own merits, in match play the score is paramount and, particularly in the later stages of a match, both cube action and move selection can be dictated by the score. As a simple example, suppose that in a match to 7 points you are leading 6-5 after the Crawford Game. Your opponent opens with a 31, making his 5-point. You roll 63 and play 24/15. Your opponent doubles – do you take? The answer is a very clear no. If you take, this will be the last game of the match and you will be at a distinct disadvantage. If you drop, the next game will be the last but at least you will have the chance of winning the opening roll. Whenever your opponent has an odd number of points post-Crawford, you always have the option of exercising what is known as your free drop.

However, if the score is 6-4 and the same sequence occurs then you must take. At 6-4 your opponent needs to win two games to win the match, you can't afford to give him one of those games for nothing.

As an example of the score dictating move strategy let's suppose you lead 6-3 post-Crawford. How would you play an opening 32? Requiring only a simple win you should steer for a simple position and play 24/21, 13/11. If, however, you trailed 3-6 and rolled 32 then you must play 13/10, 13/11. You would love to win a gammon (it would win the match for you) and playing 13/10, 13/11 leads to more prime v prime games and generates far more gammons than 24/21, 13/11.

Escape from Losers' Lane

A guy came up to Frank McCourt in O'Mahoney's bookshop, Limerick, last week as he was signing copies of *Angela's Ashes*, the best-selling memoir of his tragic childhood in the city's slum-infested lanes. The man thrust a photograph under McCourt's nose, a crumpled snap of the writer's junior class at Leamy's National School. "D'you know what that is?" he demanded. Yeah, said McCourt, it's my class picture. "I was in your class," said the man. "D'you know which one I am?" I dunno, said McCourt. "I've been out of the country for nearly 50 years."

"You!" said the man with sudden violence. "You're a disgrace to Ireland, and the Church and your mother and - here's what I think of your book" - and, with that, he snatched up a paperback of *Angela's Ashes*, tore it in half, then ripped the two halves to pieces that settled like leaves on the floor of O'Mahoney's bookshop.

Mr McCourt is getting used to being attacked by Irish patriots and Irish-American expatriates who are embarrassed by the experiences so graphically recalled in his book. Though it picked up, on publication last autumn, an unprecedented flood of tear-stained reviews, got serialised in the *New Yorker*, won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography, and the National Book Award, and hit the No 1 slot in the US bestseller list, and got its author lionised and dragged on to chat-shows from Brooklyn to Ballygo-backwards, and is now being filmed - despite all this, his pitiless truth-telling hasn't been received with undiluted rapture.

"I've had letters in America from fundamentalist Christians, saying I was blasphemous and sacrilegious," he rasps, "and letters from County Clare saying I'm a disgrace. I've been attacked by women in shops for abusing my old school..." Did people think his portrayal of late-Thirties Ireland was false, or that he shouldn't have painted it so accurately? He considered. "When Ireland was occupied by the English, the Irish were like American blacks. They'd present a front to the British, to the white man. You didn't tell the secrets. You didn't betray the tribe. So writers are now regarded as traitors, because we let all hang out, and they think we're betraying ourselves to the English. But I love the indignant letters. I'm keeping a file..."

If you haven't read *Angela's Ashes*, let me remind you what all the fuss is about. It's a relentless, if jaunty, chronicle of poverty, degradation and want. It tells how Frank McCourt was conceived in 1930 Brooklyn during a knee-trembler involving Malachy McCourt from Antrim, former IRA jailbird, and Angela Sheehan from Limerick. Forced into a shotgun wedding, they produced four children in four years: Frank, Malachy junior, and the twins Eugene and Oliver. It was the height of the Depression and they were always poor. Malachy drank away his sporadic earnings, but gave it up when his daughter, Margaret, was born. She died two months later. Malachy fell off the wagon; Angela became catatonic with grief. Supportive neighbours called in her domineering cousins, who packed the family off to Ireland and, they supposed, a new life far from the New York Depression. What the hapless McCourts found there was infinitely worse. Denied work in Belfast, or help from the Dublin IRA, Malachy, Angela and the children fetched up in Limerick with Angela's Ada Doom-like mother and shrewish sister, Aggie. A one-room flat with a flea-ridden mattress brought disease. Oliver died of a fever. Eugene, aged one, kept a pathetic vigil at the window for his departed twin, then he too died of pneumonia six months later. The family relocated to the worryingly named Roden Lane, where the next-door lavatory turned out to be the lane's communal privy, and where the damp made the ground floor uninhabitable in winter. The family lived upstairs (which they bleakly christen "Italy"), only descending back to "Ireland" when the weather allowed.

The book settles into a steady rhythm of hunger, sickness, Catholic bullying and begrudging charity. There are chills from the St Vincent de Paul Society, visits to the Labour Exchange and trips to the Fever Hospital (where Frank is diagnosed with typhoid), and ceaseless, repetitive waits for the father to come home before all the dole money is pissed away. Frantic women beg for the sweepings from the floor of Rank's Flour Mills. Children trawl the Dock Road in the rain searching for lumps of coal spilled from lorries. Two more children are born...

Amazingly, this grim tale whizzes along

like an unusually entertaining low-life soap opera because of McCourt's unpolished but lively style - a vivid, genial surge, part-Dickens, part-Joyce, full of wonderful conversations in stage-Irish demotic. So densely remembered is it, so filled with suspiciously picturesque scenes (such as Frank carrying a pig's head home for Christmas dinner, with the brown paper falling off it until the porcine head is clamped to his chest like a decapitated martyr's - very Fellini) that some people wondered if McCourt might have invented or embroidered the details.

"All of this... happened," he says with a hurt tone. "I remember something Gore Vidal said, about his book *Palimpsest*, that an autobiography tries to tell the facts of your life, while a memoir tries to give the impressions of your life. There were so many dramatic things in my life, I only put in a fraction of what I could recall. Scenes like my mother having to go to the dispensary to apply for public assistance when my father deserted us. My mother begging for scraps at the door of the priest's house. My mother trying to throw herself into the grave of Eugene, on a pouring day, and her shrieking like a banshee, with jackdaws flying around, and I was thinking, Would she really allow herself to



John Walsh meets Frank McCourt

be buried and leave us? That was all I had to remember..."

Readers of the book look at McCourt today, and consider what a survivor he is. A good-looking man, in the James Stewart mould but shorter, he is deathly pale, with snow-white hair and hurt brown eyes. He speaks softly (with a pronounced Irish accent still) but with a palpable rage not far beneath the surface. He radiates an ineffable weariness, as if the release of his bottled-up, Gogolian remembrances had left him exhausted rather than elated. "The book wasn't meant to be therapeutic," he says. "And it didn't turn out that way. Where there's memory, there's no catharsis..." It's clear he is still deeply traumatised by the past. He is quite capable of weeping at bookshop readings, where his wife Ellen chooses passages for him to read. But he is good company - exasperated by literary symposia, and by

'I arrived in New York as damaged goods, at 19. And I have to ask, who did it to me?'

those who want to claim him as a post-Joyce artist, fascinated by Irish conversational idioms (how, for instance, asking a grown-up "Why?" would elicit the reply, "Why? No why. Every why"), and good at mimicking the accents of the downtrodden Irish Catholic matriarch. "You know how the old Irish confessional used to have penitents in boxes on either side of the priest? I used to listen to married women saying [adopts reedy Mrs Doyle-from-Father Ted accent], 'I didn't do me wifely duty, father. I had a bad headache,' and the priest saying, 'That's no excuse...'"

McCourt's father is a constant puzzle. A feckless, sentimental drunkard, who thought nothing of resting his pint on the white coffin he was taking home to bury a dead son in, he is still granted a lot of charm. Sometimes, he makes things all right. He loves his children, but he deserts them when he leaves for England during the war and gradually drops out of the story. Did he think of him as a hero or a villain?

"A hero," says McCourt, without a second's thought. "He was a hero even though he didn't bring home the bacon, the goods, the money, even though he drank our lives away. When he was sober, he was the perfect father. But when he went to England, that was it. He didn't send us money, he left us literally to

starve. And we were deprived of a father in the house, which was worst of all."

Malachy's own father was a bungling IRA activist and setter of booby-traps. He became obsessed with the romantic past. In his cups, he'd get his children out of bed, sing "Kevin Barry" and "Roddy McCorley", and make the shivering tots promise to die for Ireland. I ask if the recent events in Drumcree have awakened any Republican echoes in the son's heart. "None. I despise them all, on both sides, because they're so stupid and inhuman. They're just gangs now. The noble cause has gone out the window. How can they do this, when all they need to do is behave like Gandhi or Martin Luther King? Why can't they adopt these tactics instead of causing revulsion all over the world? Why can't they be smart?"

After his father left, the family hit rock-bottom. They were evicted from their damp death-trap after they started pulling planks off the wall for firewood. Frank left school at 12, lived with his grandmother, delivered newspapers with his mad uncle, became a telegram boy and resolved to save up his fare back to the US.

"I arrived in New York as damaged goods, at 19," he says. "And I have to ask, Who did it to me? And to my brothers and everyone else - if you go to New York now, the amount of drinking among the young Irish is massive. And the violence. Where does it come from? Does he blame the Catholic church? Or his father? Or poverty? 'All of the above. It's a state of mind you get into. Because we weren't allowed the luxury of introspection. Freud apparently once said, 'There's one race of people for whom psychoanalysis is no use whatsoever: the Irish. Because they' - we - 'are so brainwashed by Catholicism.' I was completely ill-equipped for American life, for any kind of life. I wasn't illiterate, just ill-educated, in every department. I had no self-esteem. It was hard for me to make friends. It was hard for me to approach girls. I thought of myself as a species of scarecrow, with bad hair, bad teeth, bad skin." What he needed was "some sense of accomplishment in some area" and he found it, at last, in teaching, with a BA degree from New York University, and a job in a Staten Island high school, one of the worst schools in the Big Bagel. "People said, don't go near a vocational high school. They'll kill you. But I survived, because there was an empathy with the kids. I adapted to them, rather than the other way around."

An odd air of fated hopelessness hangs over McCourt's family. His three brothers came to join him in America, and all fell into alcoholism. His mother joined him in 1959 and stayed till her death in 1982. Was she happy? "No. I think she expected to find one big happy family, but it wasn't. She wanted us to marry a nice Irish Catholic girl, but none of us did. She used to say, 'Every time I cross the floor, I'm trippin' over little Jews and Protestants.' And the children would say, 'Dad, what was Nanna doin' to me in the middle of the night pourin' water on my head?' because she'd try to baptise everything..."

By the first of his three wives, McCourt had a daughter of his own, whom he named Margaret after his dead sister. He wanted the world for her. "I had a dream of being a Kodak Daddy. I thought I'd have this child, who'd go to kindergarten and graduate from there with a little mortar board and gown, and I'd be there, click click, and she'd go to elementary school and graduate and I'd be there again, click click, proud father, then she'd go to a high school (click click), then one of those sweet little colleges in New England, and she'd marry a quarterback called Chuck with powerful shoulders and terrific teeth and they'd have 2.3 children that I'd be proud of, and I'd be click click click all the way." What happened? "She became a Dead-head. She took off at 16, following the Grateful Dead across America, and I followed her trying to pluck her out of situations. When Jerry Garcia died last year, there was one man in America who didn't mourn, and that was me."

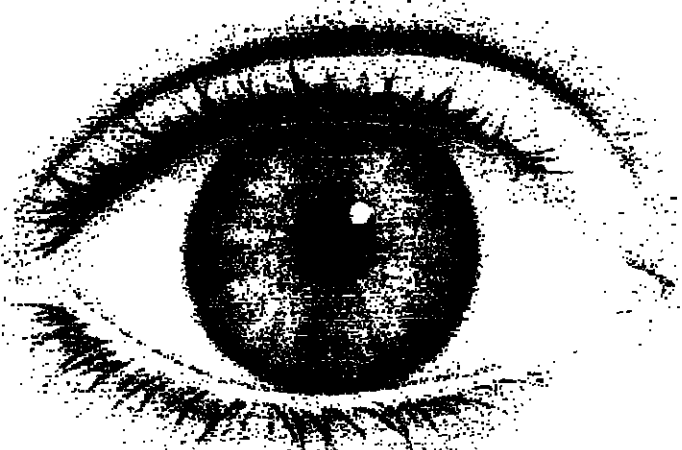
Nothing has gone right for McCourt's family and relationships - until now, as he accepts the cheers of the readerly multitudes, and glows in the company of his nice Californian wife, Ellen. He has learnt that you mostly never get what you want, that your most glamorous dreams are probably doomed. He wants Stephen Rea to play his father in the movie, because "he's from the North. He has the perfect hand-dog look". And to play his mother? "I dunno about the mother. Probably not Julia Roberts..."

A year ago, you hadn't even heard of him. But his first novel, *'Angela's Ashes'*, has won the Pulitzer Prize and is now being made into a film...



Sharon Davey on the joys of school reunions; Jasper Rees on TV; Robert Hanks on Radio. Turn to PAGE 29

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arts & books

One of the many memorable aspects of the EMI Centenary concert at Birmingham's Symphony Hall was Nigel Kennedy's warm-up chat to the audience before he and Simon Rattle gave a brilliant reading of Elgar's violin concerto. Kennedy, adopting the chirpy cockney accent that has come as a complete shock to his mother, said he wanted to test the acoustics but there weren't enough bald heads in the audience. In music-hall style he then looked a bit harder and found some, then talked about the concerto, and played and described a couple of bonus pieces of Bach he was throwing in.

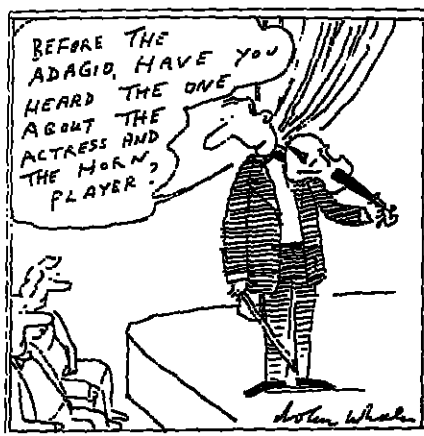
This is a break with classical music practice. Some traditions are sacrosanct. You cough but don't clap between movements. For instance, a



David Lister
arts notebook

force people to do it. Instead, he is planning related art exhibitions for audiences to look at in the interval. Why do I have a strange feeling that Nigel has been taking up painting during his lengthy sabbatical?

The Victoria and Albert Museum may charge for admission, the Tate Gallery may be free. But when it comes to parties, the V&A scores full marks for egalitarianism. Their summer party last Wednesday in the gorgeous Victorian gardens, accompanied by jazz band, buffet and drinks



particularly rasping cough shows detailed musical knowledge. A mute soloist is another musical tradition. But Kennedy's repartee, which must equate to Al Jolson suddenly speaking on screen after years of silent films, may catch on. The Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the orchestra that took Kennedy to a concert in Hong Kong last month, is now thinking of asking other of its soloists to chat to the paying punters.

Of course, just as some of the beauty queens of the silent movies destroyed a million fantasies with a high-pitched shriek, so some of the great soloists whose playing can move you to tears could be inarticulate. The last thing one wants to hear from a maestro is a pop star banality of the "I like this, hope you do too" variety. Silence can build its own mystique.

Graham Sheffield, director of arts at the Barbican Centre, has made efforts to change the experience of the classical concerts and has introduced

remembering its regular patrons when it's party time.

Radio 1 organised a reunion picture of its first DJs (those that are still alive) yesterday to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the station this summer. But I found when I was researching my new biography of Radio 1 stalwart Kenny Everett that not all the broadcasters had the happy memories that will be fed us this summer. Most of the ex-patriate radio DJs were amazed to find they now had to have producers: Ed Stewart had a pencil thrown at his nose for forgetting to give his producer a name check; and Everett himself was hauled over the coals many times for exposing the restrictive practices of the Musicians' Union. "You can't have the Northern Dance Orchestra playing The Beatles," he yelled on the air. "They don't sound like The Beatles. Worse, they sound like the Northern Dance Orchestra."

The NDO were not at yesterday's photocall.

interviews with composers of new works on stage before the work is performed so that the audience can put a face to the piece. "It reduces the fear factor," he says. "I'd like to encourage more soloists to talk to the audience but you can't

The secret sculpture garden



For 40 years, Nek Chand has been creating a fantasy 'kingdom' in an Indian forest. By Naseem Khan

It was "just a hobby," says Nek Chand, self-deprecatingly. Hardly an apposite word. A "hobby" suggests some small and inoffensive activity - like stamp-collecting or train-spotting. It does not begin to cover the creation of a whole secret empire, peopled by literally hundreds of sculptures, all made out of waste.

Nek Chand, now 72, is a quiet, self-contained man, unimpressed by the international status his "hobby" has brought him. "I am not an artist - that is just what people call me now. I am a worker, like my father."

The son of a small farmer from North India, Chand has always felt the urge to make things, he explains, but he left school early, eventually becoming a supervisor of road construction around the city of Chandigarh, in the far north of the country. The desire to create never deserted him, however, and the idea slowly grew of making objects from natural materials. Stones were his first inspiration - strange-shaped boulders that his fantasy would transform into all sorts of imagined beings. Chand began to collect suitable stones, searching the Himalayan foothills and riverbeds, and transporting promising specimens back home on the back of his bicycle. His living conditions were hardly suitable for a studio, though, so he took the bold step of covertly clearing a space in the middle of a large area of untamed undergrowth. His first act there was to build himself a small hut - 8ft square - "for sitting in", he says gravely. In this secret and illegal spot, he then began to amass his material.

Between 1958 and 1976, Chand gathered up shattered pottery shards, old bike frames, lime-kiln and metal-workshop waste, discarded street



Nek Chand's Rock Garden (top) covers 35 acres, and is still growing. Apna Arts / Paul Rogers

lamps, reject lavatory bowls. To him, nothing was useless. And, as the years went by, his forest clearing gradually became bigger and bigger, to accommodate his growing "kingdom" of life-size sculptures: animals, humans and fantasy creatures.

Sitting in his hut after work - burning cycle tyres when the natural light failed - he would study his latest finds to see what they suggested. Bears peered out at him from cycle frames; bicycle seats became rows of manikins; hair swept up from barbershop floors decorated his human figures; waste cement provided the foundation for his statues.

Slowly, whole armies of figures grew up around him, battalions of birds. The acreage of his empire con-

tinued to spread. When 10 years or so had gone by, he let his wife and two children in on the secret, and after that they all worked away together in what he called his "rock garden". They were all careful to keep the secret - their very livelihood, they thought, depended on it. "I was afraid I might be shunted out of my job for encroaching on government land," says Chand. Then, in 1974, disaster loomed. The government started clearing the wilderness land; discovery was inevitable. "When they came," Chand recalls, "they saw some of what I had created in the forest." They must have been surprised? "More than surprised," he says, with the ghost of a smile.

It could all have ended in tragedy. But such was the impact on the public of the revelation of Nek Chand's amazing "rock garden" that no one dared to knock it down. Chand did lose his job on the road works, but was given a grant to carry on sculpting instead, with a team of assistants and a truck into the bargain.

Since those days, the Rock Garden has gone on burgeoning. Today, it covers 35 acres and is still growing, though Chand no longer does the physical work himself. Access is gained through a series of low doorways, designed, says Chand, so that visitors have to duck down, so increasing their sense of magic. Twisting paths are also designed to confuse their sense of direction. Thus disoriented, many visitors little realise, as they emerge, that they are only feet away from where they first went in. "When they come out," says Chand with satisfaction, "they are smiling."

Fame and official acceptance have given Chand other advantages. Thanks to tractors and trucks, he's been able

to construct a 100ft mountain, complete with waterfalls (using recycled rainwater), while huge spectral trees have sprouted up, constructed from concrete. He has also been commissioned to create a fantasy garden for the Children's Museum in Washington. And Chand has been visiting Britain to open exhibitions of his work in London and Nottingham, where he has also been leading workshops on behalf of Apna Arts, a Nottingham-based body that has consistently sought high-profile opportunities for local Asian arts and artists. So it was that in May I found Chand in the middle of a huge grassy sward in front of Nottingham's Wollaton Hall, at the still eye of a storm. Around him, a camp of marquees was being set up for the city's annual *mela*. Sound towers were growing, men were noisily rigging up lights. Chand himself was in a quiet tent full of rubbish - tangles of metal, mounds of miscellaneous junk, heaps of odd items (a gross of shiny plastic imitation lipsticks, a pile of redundant circuit-boards). These were the raw materials for a week-long workshop with four up-and-coming British artists, all of Asian origin. Within that week, they were to see what they could come up with, using Chand and his work as their inspiration and catalyst.

It was Chand's generosity of nature - that distinctive brand of innocence which shines through all his work - that most impacted on the artists rather than any particular teaching skill. None of the four were working in the "Nek Chand style". Anu Patel, for instance, had responded to the slim grace of lengths of steel piping and was beginning to make a slender and indeterminate animal. Chand suggested that she might think about

covering over the elegant skeletal shape, but he did not press his point. It's his simplicity that is so impressive, observed Said Atrous, as he worked on his own plans for a sharp comment on civic neatness. Usha Mahenthalingam agreed: an ex-screen printer who had been forced to give it up when the chemicals disagreed with her, she welcomed the environmental friendliness of the work. But the most telling vignette came with the fourth artist, Krishan Alageswaran. A ceramicist, he had never before had to deal with a down-to-earth material like cement, and was nervously preparing to mix some, when Chand quietly squatted down beside him and proceeded to deftly mix cement and sharp sand together with a few economic movements of his bare hands. "And how do you know how much water to add?" asked Krishna anxiously. "You just pour," said Chand, in the kindly, reassuring tone of a man telling a child how to boil an egg. "And you will know."

That little exchange spoke volumes: the simplicity of the technique, the single-mindedness of the vision, the unerring determination to make bricks out of straw (or whatever else was to hand), as well as Nek Chand's generous openness. By the end of the session, Alageswaran had absorbed the new technique into his own method of making moulds, and the interchange had moved that bit further on.

'Nek Chand Shows the Way', an exhibition of photographs and sculpture from the Rock Gardens, is at Watermans Arts Centre, Middles (0181-847 5651) to 17 August; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham (0121-440 4221), 26 July-14 Sept

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BBC

David Benedict WEEK IN REVIEW			
overview			
THE BALLET	THE PLAY	THE EXHIBITION	THE FILM
The Kirov's Don Quixote	The Weir	Seurat and the Bathers	Swingers
The Kirov began a five-week London season with the British premiere of the characterful, comic four-act ballet about the innkeeper's daughter who wants to marry the barber, led by star dancers Igor Zelensky and Allynay Asymuratova, with Minkus's score in the hands of Viktor Fedotov.	The latest in the continuing wave of Irish drama, Conor McPherson's new play (winner of the prestigious George Devine award) is a set of supernatural stories told one night in a quiet provincial pub. Ian Rickson directs Kieran Anhorn, Brendan Coyne, Julia Ford, Gerard Horan and Jim Norton.	An exhibition devoted to one of the National Gallery's most famous paintings, <i>Bathers at Asnières</i> by Seurat, plus all the drawings and preparatory sketches. Seurat died at the age of 32, never knowing he would become the subject of Sondheim's <i>Sunday in the Park with George</i> .	Doug Liman's feature debut is a comedy about a struggling New York actor (played by the film's writer, Jon Favreau) who returns to dating after the collapse of his six-year relationship and heads off to LA, via Vegas, with his no-hoper mates including Vince Vaughn.
Louise Loven was transported. "Asymuratova, whose witty Kitri is a heady cocktail of angel and mix ... and, of Zelensky: 'Who couldn't love a man who dances like this?' "Rationality cannot explain why it is such ecstasy to see the Kirov back in London, and just why I cried with joy," drooled <i>The Telegraph</i> . "As an exuberant, high-spirited, joyful and bustling spectacle, it presents a positive face for a company being revitalised," cheered <i>The Standard</i> . "The stage reels from the impact of four acts of virtuosic dancing ... a lusty and broadly animated ballet ... an infectious delight," clapped <i>The Times</i> . "Slitters from one over-clapped (and often clapped out) routine to the next," groused <i>The Mail</i> .	Adrian Turpin was beguiled. "It moves in circles, its narratives striking against one another ... the kind of work that grows on second viewing - hard as it may be to imagine a better evening in the theatre." "A play full of the sadness of disappointed lives ... the most exciting evening in theatrical London," gasped <i>The Guardian</i> . "Beautiful ... Through a fabric embroidered full of details, the play makes us feel the transitory charm of life even while, no less powerfully, it tells us of life's wastefulness ... Ian Rickson, directing, could not make a better case for the play," revelled <i>the FT</i> . "When did you last see a decent ghost story in the theatre?" beamed <i>The Times</i> . "Sucks you in ... good stuff but not Brian Friel," observed <i>The Mail</i> .	Tom Lubbock declared "there wasn't more to Seurat than meets the eye ... nothing heroic nor wretched. Neither meaningful nor absurd, about humanity there is nothing to say." "Having achieved its most important task, which is to encourage us to view the <i>Bathers</i> with excitement, as if for the first time, the show sets busily about the business of providing the picture with a context," enthused <i>The Sunday Times</i> . "Cold and still, frozen at its core ... The show itself is beautiful and informative, the best so far in the Gallery's Sainsbury Wing," heralded <i>The Telegraph</i> . "That rare thing, an exhibition that restores one's faith in art history as an aid to aesthetic response and intellectual understanding," crowed <i>The Standard</i> .	Ryan Gilbey admired "this warm and witty American comedy ... Liman shot the picture quickly and cheaply, and it has a kinetic feel without seeming ragged." "It's fun to watch ensemble playing for a good director that makes your average Hollywood movie look totally fake," approved <i>The Guardian</i> . "Fresh and witty ... even those allergic to male camaraderie may take pleasure in <i>Swingers</i> ," smiled <i>The Times</i> . "Too messily constructed to be an undiluted joy and snagged by a sense of complacency ... nonetheless a refreshing take on young men," nodded <i>The Standard</i> . "Ninety minutes spent learning how not to pick up girls ... this is what the movies were made for, isn't it?" noted <i>Time Out</i> . "You will never listen to the Bee Gees again in the same way," grinned <i>the FT</i> .
Further performances 25, 26 (mat & eve) at the Coliseum, London WC2 (0171-632 8300). Season ends 9 Aug.	The Royal Court Upstairs at the Ambassadors, London WC2 (0171-565 5000) to 26 July.	<i>Seurat and the Bathers</i> , sponsored by Pearson, is at the National Gallery (0171-747 2885) to 28 Sept.	Cert 15, 96 minutes, all over London and on general release.
Superbly danced and often hilariously funny. Let's hope the rest of the season lives up to this triumphant opening.	An impeccably acted evening of storytelling lit by flashes of insight.	A well-put together and strangely revealing show which leads you to think, "Is that all there is?"	Ironic, painfully authentic fun. Favreau is so hip he's making guest appearances on <i>Friends</i> .
KEY			

Load of old dholaks

As the SBC's 'Rhythm Sticks' festival begins to bang its drum for all things percussive, William Hartston, The Independent's games editor, beats a path to the door of bongo expert, Pete Lockett

Goats must have a terrible time in India, if the instrument store of Pete Lockett is any indication. Quite apart from several drums strung with goat-skin (it produces a higher and more vibrant tone than the thicker buffalo hide), he has a jangly thing on a string made from a collection of goats' toenails and sounding like... well, rather like goats' toenails being jangled, and another item with what look like dried-up seed pods, which produce a susurrant rattling sound. "I was told these are goats' testicles," he says, as he looks at them with some suspicion. "Maybe they're not."

When a man already has frame

scarcely been attempted before. "When I first learnt rhythm and drumming, I split it up into bars," he explains. But that is the Western idiom. The Indian style, by contrast, more often starts with a phrase, then repeats it with its length changed by adding or subtracting syllables of sound. The same phrase then recurs out of phase with the original metre in a manner that can sound both exciting and disturbing to a Western ear.

The origins of such rhythmic complexity interest Pete Lockett greatly. As he coaxes wonderful sounds from an Egyptian tabla—a deeper and more guttural sound than the Indian version—

drumming over the phone in a way that lets the other translate it to his tabla. "But you should hear him on the phone speaking Tamil," Pete Lockett says. "If you could sample off a bit of that, it would be amazing."

The concept of innate language-based rhythms is something that has also interested psychologists. Recent research has suggested that we are all born with a propensity to listen to periodic sounds and this enables every baby to acquire the basic lilt of its mother early in the first year of life. A good deal of research has been done to see if such problems as dyslexia, stammering, or even straightforward clumsiness are correlated with a basic rhythmic inability, but no very clear conclusions have been reached. One research paper in 1993 even analysed the rhythmic structure of babies' crying, concluding that "an ontogenetic history of the rhythms of infant cry sounds may contribute to understanding organismic and environmental experiences that contribute to development" ("Rhythmic organization of the sound of the infant crying" by PS Zeskind, S Parker-Price and RG Barr; *Developmental Psychology*, September 1993).

Browsing through the literature in general, however, it is hard to escape the conclusion that rhythm is something better understood by a multi-percussionist than a psychologist. Especially on the question of those finger-twistingly difficult exercises in which one tries to persuade the two hands to tap in different rhythms at the same time. The simplest form is to tap three beats to the bar with your right hand while tapping two to the same bar with your left. If you find that too easy, you can try five to the bar with one hand and three with the other. Psychologists have puzzled for decades over what is going on in the two hemispheres of the brain, one controlling each hand, both working simultaneously in different rhythms. "You don't do it like that," says Pete Lockett, "you think of it as a composite

single rhythm performed by both hands." Which was precisely the conclusion reached by JJ Summers, SK Ford and JA Todd in their paper "Practice effects on the co-ordination of the two hands in a bimanual tapping task" in the journal *Human Movement Science* in 1993.

Listening to Pete Lockett talking as his fingers blur into high-speed, intricate bongo drumming rhythms, you would conclude that, for him, the only difficult bit about drumming is the muscular pain you may get in your legs from holding the bongos between your knees for a long period. After a brief lesson from him on the bongos, I can confirm that they leave your fingers feeling pretty sore too. At least they would have if I hadn't kept getting them tangled with my thumbs when trying to co-ordinate a pathetically simple rhythm.

Now here's one for you to try at home. It's an example of the Indian style of syllable-dropping. All you have to do is clap four beats to the bar while speaking this 15-beat chant: Ta-Ka-Di-Me Ta-Ka-Di-Me Ta-Ka-Di-Me Ta-Ki-Ta, stressing the initial Ta each time. So far, so good, because each Ta occurs on the first beat of the bar. But then you immediately repeat the 15-beat phrase, starting on the next beat, which is the final one of the fourth bar. Your clapping stress is thrown out of sync with your speaking stress and, if you're anything like me, your hands refuse to co-operate. And as for getting to the end of the third set of 15-beats, then ending it all with three Ta-Ti-Ki-Da-Tum-Ta cadences... well, I think I had better stick to the bongos. After all, there are worse things than sore fingers and knees. Especially if you're a goat.

The SBC's Rhythm Sticks festival runs for one week from tomorrow. Pete Lockett and Bill Bruford's Network of Sparks is on Monday at 7.30pm in the Purcell Room. Pete Lockett's Network of Rhythms workshop on Sun 20 July, 11.30am-1pm, in the RPH Hothouse. Booking/info: 0171-960-4242



drums, taiko drums, bongos, mridangam, ghatam, kanjira, a collection of tablas (both Indian and Egyptian), dholak, bodhran, req, udu and all sorts of other more or less conventional instruments among his percussion collection, you may wonder why he needs goats' gollies as well. But for a multi-percussionist like Pete Lockett—whose *Network of Sparks* collaboration with Bill Bruford (late of Yes and King Crimson) forms one of the high points of this week's South Bank *Rhythm Sticks* festival—even such testicular off-cuts can play a part in the creation of a musical style that seeks to integrate sounds and rhythms from different cultures—"creating new juxtapositions", as Lockett puts it, between Western classical and Indian, or even just northern and southern Indian, in a way that has

he says: "I guess if you could speak the language, you could play the drum better." He then utters a fine series of noises similar to those of an over-excited Arabic speaker while also sharing the cadences and rhythms of the sounds that have just emerged from the drum.

He shows me a book of tabla rhythms that had been dictated by an Indian colleague on the phone. For such conversations, they have devised a basic rhythmic vocabulary of five drum beats: Ta, Ti, Ki, Da, Tum, each signifying a different region of one of the two drums. But, of course, it's more complicated than that. Da, for example, is Na (striking the rim of the high drum) + Ge (a resonant sound on the base). This strange language enables one man to perform some verbal



Goat heard: Pete Lockett (above) and the rattle allegedly made from dried goats' testicles (left) Philip Meech



Anglo-Saxon platitudes

THEATRE The Wuffings Notcutts Nursery, Wickham Market, near Woodbridge, Suffolk

Bring together Europe's largest potting shed, the Year of Opera and Musical Theatre, and a crash course in the history of the Angles, and what have you got? Answer: *The Wuffings*, an everyday story of Anglo-Saxon royal folk. Soap opera meets historical pageant.

Head of the family is Raedwald, king of the East Angles, with ambitions to be ruler of all of Britain, who was interred in the famous ship burial at Sutton Hoo just down the road from the potting shed. Married to him is Edith, a kind of low-rent pagan Lady Macbeth, and lurking round her are three even lower-rent Weird Sisters. Except that these are the sisters of Wyrd, the Anglo-Saxon concept of destiny.

Raewald's problem, as the Venerable Bede saw it, was that he couldn't decide whether to be a Christian or a pagan. Having been converted by St Augustine (who sports perhaps the world's earliest pair of sunglasses), he kept two sets of altars at home: The Word versus Wyrd. It was a choice that seems to have been far more political than truly religious. Kevin Crossley-Holland and Ivan Cutting's play (performed by Eastern Angles) is not a sophisticated entertainment but, like some party political broadcast on behalf of the pagans, it continually rams home this historical point about how cynical some of the early Christians' motives were for converting.

The play draws a few comparisons between Christian and pagan myths. Edith's disgust at the idea of drinking Christ's blood is juxtaposed with the story of the hero Beowulf sucking blood from the monster Grendel. The god Woden won wisdom by crucifying himself on the cosmic ash tree.

There are also cheeky moments in which the traditional roles of pagans and Christians are reversed: "You need a long spoon to sup with these people," says Edith, contemplating the God squad. And you would. The early Chris-

tians are, with few exceptions, portrayed as venial and petty. When Raedwald goes to war against the Northumbrian king, he chooses to fight as "one army under two gods". Sound familiar from Hong Kong?

Whether this fictional Raedwald (Stephen Finegold) would have made the grade in the real world of Anglo-Saxon warrior kings is questionable. Imagine trying to placate a retinue of gold-hungry camp-followers with a raised eyebrow or sarky look. He's no wimp: he swings a sword with the best of them in the sword-swinging scene. He is a bit fey, though, as if always on the point of saying, "Hey-ho, this kingship lark. Stuff that for a game of soldiers."

Edith has a bit more spunk, but gets little chance to use it. And that's part of the problem. Anglo-Saxon history is intrinsically interesting, but the domestic life of the Wuffing family is really quite dull. You want the Borgias. This is more like the Archers.

It does look magnificent. A 90ft-long sandy beach is littered with the type of ironwork (cauldrons, silver birdbaths, burning braziers) you might find in Islington's trendier furniture shops. There's a lot of use made of old church pews, which are shuffled around to create boats, walls and even a burial mound.

There's one thrilling moment when an external door opens to reveal a furnace of red light, from which a blacksmith emerges, plunging his sword into one of the birdbaths with an audible sizzle. But, generally, *The Wuffings* is surprisingly short on spectacle: more blood, gore, wood and fire, please. More wuffing and puffing. And less of Pat Whymark's music (though beautifully sung), which crosses the Anglo-Saxon bards with Joan Baez. Now that's an unfortunate hybrid, even for a potting shed.

To 27 July. Box office: 01473 211498

Adrian Turpin

For those in peril by the sea

Diana Burrell has made no secret of her love for the windswept East Anglian fenland of her childhood, and her music has frequently evoked its wind, sea and sky. For her first opera, she chose Susan Hill's novel *The Albatross*, which tells how a disturbed and lonely outsider in a close-knit fishing community is eventually driven to murder. Shades of *Peter Grimes* are made more ominous by Hill's own close association with Britten.

As its belated premiere on Thursday made clear, however, Burrell's *Albatross* successfully steers clear of Britten's influence to conjure up an independent world. The opera was actually composed between 1984 and 1986, and is now receiving its first performances thanks to Trinity College of Music. It shows a command not only of atmosphere but also of the more elusive operatic arts.

OPERA The Albatross
Spitalfields Market Opera

The opera's two acts are presented in Stephen Langridge's imaginative production, with designs by Kyung-Hee Lee, via a cunningly adaptable basic set, well lit by Paul Russell. Though neither libretto nor score suggests this, Duncan, the retarded anti-hero, is played by two singers: one grimly real, the other representing his inner aspirations. Though initially disconcerting, this sometimes worked to great effect, as well as practical advantage.

Ted, the fisherman—Duncan's hero and helper, who drowns in a lifeboat accident—is, like the two Duncans, a tenor; even given a performance with more gravitas than that managed here, this would seem a mistake. The vocal lines for Hilda, his vindictive, wheel-

chair-bound mother, are peppered with hysterical high notes, making the words inaudible and the audience sometimes laugh. But Burrell's music, like Langridge's production, is generally highly economical, scoring most strongly when she gives free rein to her imagination to conjure mood or enliven character with a single gesture.

There are marvellous orchestral moments suggesting, if comparisons must be made, the fantasy of Tippett or the gloomy textural undertows of Penderecki. And while the opening stages of Act 2, beginning with an interminable bassoon solo, betray the composer's lack of operatic experience, both the ensuing scene of Ted's funeral—complete with hymn-tune cleverly overlaid by action and reaction—and the concluding murder are handled with real flair and sophistication.

The Trinity singers and orchestra, under the secure guidance of Christopher Fifield, cope very well with Burrell's demands. Amid a predominantly male line-up, I must single out James Geer and Stephen Brown as the two Duncans, Amanda Palmer as the mother, Julian Smith as Ted and Stephen Bowen as one of the other fishermen. As though this wasn't sufficient, the college precedes *The Albatross* with a very decent attempt on Vaughan Williams's rather uninspiring *Riders to the Sea*, a further study in the lethal effect of the elements on a small community, again resourcefully directed by Langridge. A long but worthwhile evening.

7.30pm tonight, Spitalfields Market Opera, 4/5 Lamb Street, London E1. Booking: 0171-377 1362

Keith Potter

A shot in the dark

In the words of the popular song, "It ain't what you do/It's the way that you do it."

Last year, the musical *The Fields of Ambrosia* ("Where everyone knows ya...") opened to frankly hideous reviews. Part of the problem was the story, that of a travelling executioner who drove around with an electric chair in the back of his van. More than one critic took exception to its "frying tonight" tone, shooting thousands of volts through someone while singing about it. Yet the same thing happens in *Assassins* and I don't recall anyone taking umbrage when it was premiered at the Donmar Warehouse.

This 1990 show by Stephen Sondheim with a book by John Weidman is a musical of murderous intent. Part vaudeville, part history, it is a witty chronicle of the successful and failed attempts to assassinate Presidents of the United States. From John Wilkes Booth shooting Abraham Lincoln to John Hinckley, who tried to despatch Ronald Reagan in a bizarre effort to attract the attention of Jodie Foster, its darkly theatrical examination of character and warped American values would be startling in a play. In a musical,

MUSICAL Assassins
New End Theatre, London

it should be extraordinary.

The original production of *Assassins* used a band of just three and that's what you get here. When it comes to casting Sondheim shows, debate continues to rage over whether to cast actors who sing or singers who act. Director Sam Buntrock wisely sides with the latter, which makes life easier for musical director Caroline Humphris, who has done exemplary work with the cast, many of whom have fine voices.

Paul Keating, who shot to fame playing the lead role in *Tommy*, plays the Balladeer, who slips through the show as guide and witness to the events unfolding. It's an excellent performance, entirely focused and wonderfully relaxed with none of the mannerisms affected by many young singers in musicals. Peter Straker has a ringing pomposity as Charles Guiteau, who sings a cakewalk to the gallows after shooting Garfield twice in the back. Andrew Newey as Hinckley and Fiona Dunn as the Charles Manson disciple "Squeaky" Fromme sing the pop duet "Unworthy of Your

Love" (with its deliciously cheesy tune and creepy lyrics) with terrific sincerity and strength.

All of this goes some way towards redeeming the poorly directed non-musical scenes. It's clear that Buntrock loves the piece but it needs a much firmer hand to punctuate and shape it. Too many dialogue scenes merely run their course, the stranded cast resorting to over-emoting when more truth is what's needed. The designer Tim Wilson has come up with a nice American gothic-style set but lighting each of the presidents' portraits pulls focus away from the action.

One detail serves to distil the problems. It's crucial that we believe the guns that each of the characters hold are real. If you can't fire blanks, the sound effects have to be first-rate. Here they're muffled and the sense of danger drains away. And no one acts like these things kill: it's as if they're holding water pistols. Nevertheless, the musical structure is so strong that the show's virtues still shine brightly. If not a palpable hit, then a near miss.

To 3 Aug (0171-794 0022)

David Benedict

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Confused by the last daze of the Raj

Blunders all round marked the end of British rule, says Sunil Khilnani

The quarter-century leading up to the Partition and Independence of India in August 1947 is one of the most intricate, accelerated and decisive passages in 20th-century history. It is not at all easy to explain why events unfolded as they did.

British historians have told it as a story of upright leadership which bequeathed to the elites of Pakistan and India smoothly functioning tropical Westminster. Historians on the subcontinent have celebrated their own starved heroes – Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru and Patel – fighting epic struggles against the British or their opponents. From each point of view, it goes without saying that the protagonists knew exactly what they were doing.

The most welcome message of Patrick French's energetic book is that most of the actors, most of the time, did not. Motives were fluid, outcomes contingent. During the Thirties and Forties, the politics of the Indian empire was awash with questions: when would the British leave, to whom would they hand over power, would free Indians live together in a single state, and would it be federal or confederal, religious or secular? Yet by the end of the Forties the uncertainties had crystallised, setting a pattern for the subcontinent's future in ways that no one had quite expected or wanted. Even Jinnah did not want a sovereign, independent Pakistan.

French is right to try to integrate the histories of Partition and Independence, rather than seeing them as somehow inconveniently related (as most Indians would like to believe). He wades intrepidly – and sometimes with alarming insouciance – into a minefield of controversy, determined to produce "a radical re-interpretation". That, it has to be said, is not quite delivered.

Until recently, histories of this period have been written on the basis of a quite narrow range of sources (mainly state archives, often carefully doctored). French does offer something new here, making use of declassified British intelligence documents. But he relies mainly on that trusted warhorse of all who write about this period: the 12-volume *Transfer of Power* documents. He has not explored Indian or Pakistani sources, apart from some interviews which try to evoke the consequences of Partition. The result is a very much a British view of the story, albeit a self-critical one.

French uses the archives of the Indian Political Intelligence – a shadowy operation run from Whitehall by Philip Vickery, who in French's view did "as much as any single person to prolong British rule in India" – to reveal an administration rapidly losing its grip as well as its will to rule. Accelerated by the pressures of war, the crumbling of the formidable apparatus of the Raj was apparent by the Forties.

Liberty or Death: India's journey to independence and division
by Patrick French, HarperCollins, £20

It helped to make the Quit India agitation of 1942 possible, after which the British were merely in nominal control of large areas.

Administrative fatigue was matched by monumental stupidity on the part of the British leadership. The appointment in 1936 of the pig-headed – and pig-sticking – Linlithgow as viceroy was one instance of this. But what ensured that the British withdrawal from India would be messy and riddled with confusion was the personality of Winston Churchill.

French makes clear not only the man's obnoxious bigotry but also his peerless ignorance of, and ineptitude over, the "Indian question". On the other hand, it is good to see French restore Wavell to his rightful historical place. Wavell's brief viceroyalty has been overshadowed by the spectacular antics of his successor, but it was crucial in establishing the template largely followed by Mountbatten.

French moves his story along fluently, though the historical narrative is punctuated by anecdotal passages that record his own subcontinental wanderings. These encourage him to exercise a penchant for Indian absurdities (mispronunciation, misspellings, etc) which become arch and wearisome. For a would-be revisionist, French also has a worrying tendency to neglect argument in favour of *ad hominem* stabs and droll character cameos. Perhaps he tried too hard to please his publishers.

On more serious ground, his judgements are often persuasive. He rightly insists that "the potential for a complete administrative collapse in India in the late Forties should not be forgotten". Far from inheriting modern politics gleaming with liberal polish, the Indian and Pakistani élites took command of faltering, truncated states. That it was possible – at least in India – to pull this legacy round to a strong, democratic and secular union was a measure of the achievement of men such as Nehru, not a residue of the Raj's splendour.

The one act of the Raj that could not be undone was Partition. Running through this book is a powerful sense of Partition's continuing effects, and regret at its destruction of many of India's cultures and habits. Partition weakened all communities, and delivered few benefits to them. It implanted confusion into Muslim ideas of selfhood, was catastrophic for the Sikhs (who don't much figure in French's story) and has encouraged Hindus to dream of an ethnically pure "Bharatavarsha". It survives as an always available memory, around which the dissatisfactions of modern politics on the subcontinent can periodically, and murderously, coalesce.



A Rajput version of Kali (c 1660) from 'Indian Miniatures and Paintings: the collection of Howard Hodgkin' (Electa)

Keeping up appearances

Paul Barker celebrates a dandy who wrote the best essays since Orwell

Style is the woman. For some reason, "dandy" is a word used only of men; but Angela Carter was a dandy. In this Aladdin's cave collection of her essays and reviews, she writes of visiting her Giles-like Yorkshire grandmother "in all the atrocious sartorial splendour of the underground high-style of the late Fifties, black mesh stockings, spike-heeled shoes, bum-hugging skirt, jacket with a black fox collar." She loved the Sixties ("truly it felt like Year One"), when she was in her twenties; but the pattern of her life and her style was fixed well before that. Some of her best, wittiest writing is here. Nothing overtakes her finest fiction (*The Magic Toyshop*

Shaking a Leg: collected journalism and writings
by Angela Carter, Chatto & Windus, £25

and *The Bloody Chamber*, especially). But many of her essays are otherwise unbeatable. The dandy knows the deep importance of surface show. He (or she) knows that a joke can penetrate where acres of analysis fail. Dandyism also implies stoicism. In her introduction, Joan Smith notes that Angela Carter "never indulges in self-pity". Writing about her adolescent illnesses (she starved herself into stylish thinness), Angela Carter says that such troubles should be borne "stoically. That is, lightly."

Her eye is unerring. The landscape of South Yorkshire is

described as "mucky pastoral". Diana Dors is the "personification of the buxom backside of the other Britain". Poor DH Lawrence is demolished by her gleeful perception of what his fixation on female clothing, in *Women in Love*, meant sexually: "The stockings covers a hairy, muscular leg."

This was written in 1975, when Lawrence was still, for his many fans, a hero with clayless feet. As this selection confirms, the Seventies were her great decade for such fierce, jewel-like writing. For many years she was probably better known for her journalism than for

her novels. She was precipitated into fame (and *Who's Who*) by the 1984 film *The Company of Wolves* – which delighted her. The cinema, another art of surface appearances, was one of her greatest loves. She gives a tender account of going to the Granada. Tooting, with her father. She pays homage – almost heroine-worship – to Louise Brooks, another female dandy.

Most of this writing first appeared in *New Society*. The magazine published 88 out of these 148 pieces. She became part of its characteristic tone. She could, as Joan Smith says, "detect bullshit at 200 paces". (Hence her uneasy relationship with feminist conformists. She called Marilyn French's *The*



Angela Carter: 'dandy'

Women's Room "an instruction manual for the older woman post-graduate student.")

The *New Society* association began when, in 1966, I read and published an article (collected

here) that she mailed to the office out of the blue: I was enchanted by her writing. The tie was sealed by her astonishing essay, "Notes For a Theory of Sixties Style," with its very Carterish opening, still alive and kicking 30 years later: "Velvet is back, skin anti-skin, mimic nakedness."

This collection brings together, for the first time, all her extraordinary articles about Japan, to which she went in 1969 – abandoning her first husband on the proceeds of the Somerset Maugham award she won for her third novel. (The money didn't go far enough. She worked for a while in a bar in the Ginza district of Tokyo, where "a hostess can hardly call her breasts her own".) It is hard to realise, today, what an unknown country Japan was then.

She sent back iridescent reports on the country's "trim dementia", most memorably on its sadistic comics. (Sadism, to her, was a kind of dandyism of sex.) "What is actually going on in these pictures

often looks rather odd to me because I cannot read Japanese. When a translation is provided, it usually turns out to be worse than I could have imagined. Why isn't this girl fighting back during a gang rape? Because they forethoughtfully dislocated her limbs, first." In the same essay, she formulated the Machiavellian rule that all women suffer "unless they are very wicked indeed: when they obey the Sadeian law and live happily ever after".

In her grandmother's house – to which she went as a child to escape wartime bombing – she tells us that the few books included *Machiavelli* and several copies of *For's Book of Marryns*, with its gruesome illustrations. You do wonder.

She turned the same sharp but friendly eye on England and its "more than Asiatic patience". She was a natural-born iconoclast. "Alienated," she wrote, "is the only way to be, after all." *Shaking a Leg* contains some of the best essays since Orwell.

Read it as soon as you can, but, if by any mad oversight you haven't already, buy volume one first.

— SHERRIDAN MORLEY, SUNDAY TIMES

LOITERING WITH INTENT

The Apprentice

PETER O'TOOLE

Out now in paperback

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Loitering with Intent: The Child

PAN 50 YEARS

Elegies at ebb tide from St Lucia

Paula Burnett hears a Nobel laureate's songs at twilight

The Bounty by Derek Walcott
Faber & Faber, £7.99



Derek Walcott: 'pun and paradox'

small creatures can have "no calendar except for this bountiful day".

Walcott starts from Dante's hymn to the Virgin-Mother, with which the *Paradiso* ends. The bounty is also nature's. But this is Captain Bligh's *Bounty*, too, bringing breadfruit seedlings like manna to feed Caribbean slaves. Walcott embroiders ideas: food; the palm-shaped leaf; the necessary mutiny of Mr Christian; his mother's devout faith; mad John Clare praising the minutiae of nature; the heroism of the ants' collective effort; and the

heroism of the black people's story. Languages, too, have histories of loss and survival. He watches St Lucia's particular patois fade, a loss to which his own work in English contributes. But these poems hum with an elegiac sadness as the ground-bass of joy. Walcott is unsurpassed at sounding both notes at once: "Great bursts of exaltation crest the white breaker, / deep-drawn as the sighing shale, as the heart's salt history".

There are no fireworks here. The tone is sombre, veined with a sparkle like granite. And these are very wet poems, full of weather and tears, but also the "bliss" of streams and the fertile damp of Clare's East Anglian fens.

Walcott's familiar confessional voice now says calmly that "the only art left is the preparation of grace". His faith is less orthodox, more tested, but he remains convinced that "the soul's Australia is like the New Testament / after the Old World, the code of an eye for an eye". Few poets can meld metaphysical, moral and political registers with such compressed energy. These are also lonely poems, echoing Oedipus and Timon, invoking the defiant castaway. "All I require is an acre of sunlight and a salt wind."

Occasionally the tone is strained, seduced by its own sonority. Though demanding, the poems share their bounties best when their music is most stripped and simple. They may not appeal to the impatient. They may not appeal particularly to the young. But for those who know what loss is – and, as he reminds us, there is no loss without love – the book will yield a slow, rich juice from its presses.

This fine book may well come to be regarded as the standard by which other theatrical autobiographies are judged.

— BRYAN FORBES, DAILY TELEGRAPH

LOITERING WITH INTENT

The Apprentice

PETER O'TOOLE

Out now in paperback

ALSO AVAILABLE

Loitering with Intent: The Child

PAN 50 YEARS

Some old fruits and a nutcase

Richard Davenport-Hines backs party people against the puritans

Wilde's Last Stand: decadence, conspiracy and the First World War by Philip Hoare, Duckworth, £16.95

There are episodes in history which, though ephemeral in themselves, illuminate with almost pictorial vividness the society in which they happened. Philip Hoare has discovered one such episode - a sensational libel action of 1918 - which he has coloured into a bright panorama of early-20th-century British social life. Hoare traces the connections joining the Naughty Nineties to the Jazz Age of the Twenties. He makes a captivating medley of *avant-garde* art, night-club life, drugs, "negro hands", polymorphous sex, right-wing nutters and the prurience of all who set themselves up as public moralists.

Hoare's central figure is Noel Pemberton-Billing, a restless and belligerent aviation pioneer who was elected to the Commons in 1916 as an independent MP. In one of several superb photographs, Billing is shown campaigning in a by-election, spruce and melodramatic in the cockpit of a fighter, gesturing at the loungers in the Mile End Road like Oswald Mosley.

Pemberton-Billing was a demagogic proto-Fascist who ran xenophobic newspapers called *The Imperialist* and *Vigilante*. In 1918 he turned from his usual denunciations of "Jew boys" and Huns to announce the existence of a conspiracy by the German Empire to sap the British war effort. He claimed that the German secret service had a list of 47,000 British perverts - "Privy councillors, wives of cabinet ministers, even cabinet ministers themselves, diplomats, poets, bankers, editors, newspaper proprietors" who were "prevented from putting their full strength into the war by corruption and blackmail" and were emasculating the fighting men with their seductive wives. His allegations were luridly misogynistic: "In Lesbian ecstasy the most sacred secrets of State were betrayed".

Billing attacked the performance by a dancer named Maud Allan of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* in an article headlined "The Cult of the Clitoris". When Allan sued for libel, Billing defended himself, and used the courtroom for a series of highly publicised stunts to embarrass the wartime government. He relied on dubious witnesses including his mistress Eileen Villiers-Stuart (shortly

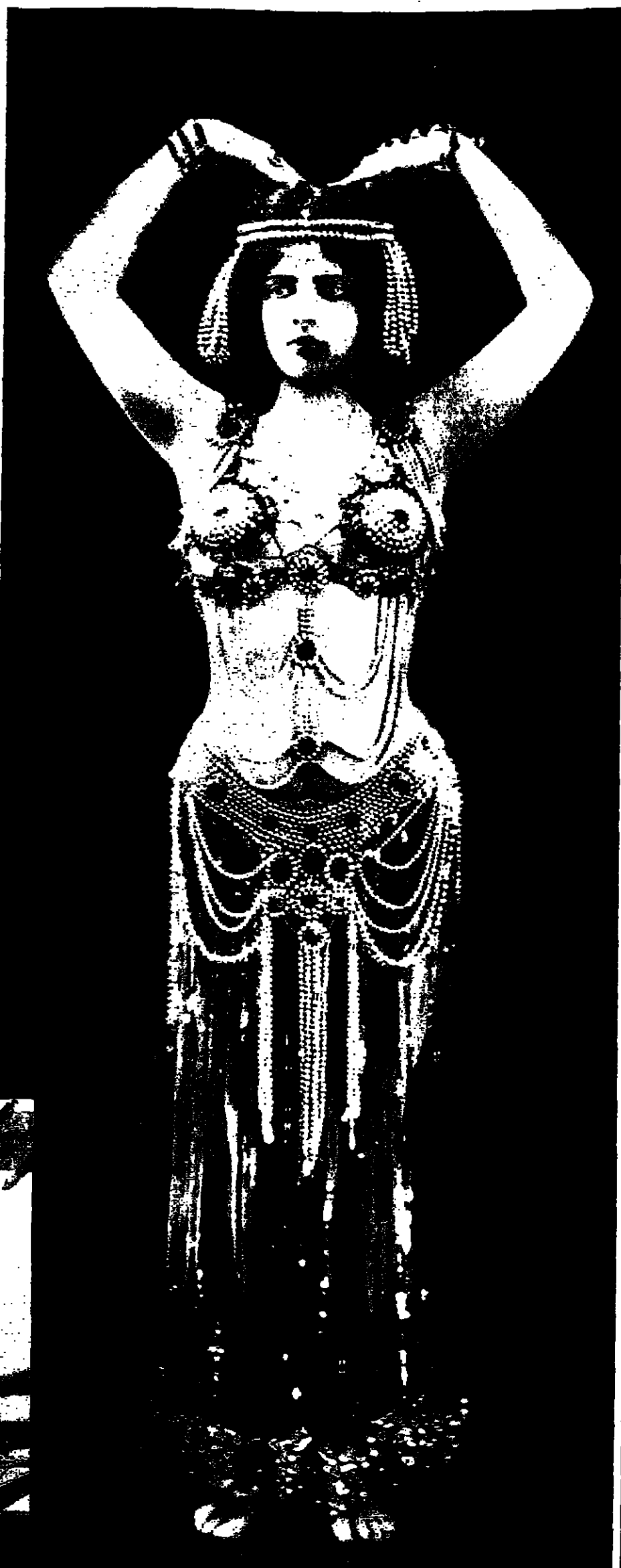
afterwards convicted of bigamy), a hysteric psychiatrist called Serrell Cooke and a vindictive young man named Harold Spencer, recently invalided out of the British Secret Service after obviously mad claims of almighty German conspiracies.

Together they subjected their imaginary perverts, from the former prime minister Asquith and his wife onwards, to a campaign of wild innuendo calculated to cause as much political disruption as possible. It is doubtful whether the sexology was widely understood. As a bewildered Lord Albenham asked his Turf Club cronies, "who is this Greek chap Clitoris they're all talking about?" Confronted with the inflammatory techniques of the political and sexual witch-hunt, the judge lost control of the case and the jury found for Billing.

Billing's premeditated histrionics, the far-fetched perjuries of his witnesses, the scurrility and paranoia are enthralling. But the excitement in the Central Criminal Court do not provide the only compelling passages in *Wilde's Last Stand*. Billing's stunts were yet another bout in the perpetual struggle between English decadents and the puritan philistinism of John Bull. In Hoare's treatment, the *joie de vivre* of the party people and the generosity of their lives make a brilliant contrast to the sterile violence of Billing's gang. Ultimately this book shows the meagreness of nationalism and all the virulence conveyed in Mussolini's maxim. "Punching", he once said, "is an exquisite



Noel Pemberton-Billing MP, that not-so-magnificent man in his flying machine, and (right) the sultry *Salome* of Maud Allan, alleged high priestess of the 'Cult of the Clitoris'



The blacker they are, the harder they fall

John Sutherland on ringside racism, Regency style

An African-American heavyweight boxer is dying. Once "the Greatest", he has taken the one-way ticket to Palookaville: broken-down and broke, an empty husk of the supreme athlete who once floated like a butterfly and stung like a bee, the dark destroyer. Who is it: Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali or Iron Mike Tyson, 10 years after his last judgement day with Evander Holyfield? No, it is Tom Molineaux, the "Black Ajax", the American ex-slave and "uppity nigger" who came from America in 1811 to challenge the nonpareil champion of all-England, the darling of the Regency bucks, Tom Cribb, to two bare-knuckle contests.

George MacDonald Fraser has set himself a tricky problem as a historical novelist. Anyone who knows the history of boxing knows that Molineaux did not pull it off. He was thrashed in a gruelling 34-rounder. (Rounds were marked by one of the contestants being put on the ground. The contest went on until one fighter failed to "come up to scratch", a line drawn in the mid-

Black Ajax by George MacDonald Fraser, HarperCollins, £16.99

dle of the "ring" of spectators). In a rematch in front of 20,000 spectators (a quarter of whom were "nobility"), Cribb disposed of Molineaux in a mere 20 minutes.

The American died four years later of dissipation and disappointment. How can the novelist create any suspense out of these historical facts? Fraser does not try. Before becoming a novelist relatively late in life, with *Flashman*, he was a journalist on the *Glasgow Herald*. Fraser poses *Black Ajax* as a journalistic investigation. The novel takes the form of 16 eye-witness "reports". Some are from fictional characters (such as Molineaux's mulatto lover, "Mollybird"). Others are literary - William Hazlitt and Pierce Egan, notably. Still others - such as the Prince Regent himself - are historical voices. As always, Fraser's command of period slang is wonderfully convincing (and, as a glossary indicates, scrupulously researched).

For devoted Fraserians a particular interest attaches to the testimony of Buckley ("Mad Buck") Flashman, Flashie's father. Molineaux's downfall is precipitated by his offending this wicked old man, who has all his son's vices without the self-mockery.

The unknown reporter's investigation establishes that Molineaux in fact won the first contest and Cribb was saved (like Gene Tunney against Dempsey) by a dishonest "long count". The chronicles I have looked at record that the Bristol battler won it fair and square, both times. More persuasively, Fraser's reporter narrates how, like many black athletes since, Molineaux was spoiled by early success. He made his

condition with drink, doxies and the fastidious of bangers-on. Molineaux, the stronger and cleverer fighter, should have won, but threw it away.

This relates to the most interesting feature of *Black Ajax*: its analysis of the complex relationship between white spectators and black athletes. Molineaux's worldly-wise black trainer enlightens his fighter as to the treacherousness of his English fans: "They love their fight game, and they invented it, and they think they own it! You think they'll admire to see a sassy loudmouth nigger take it away from them...? A black man, Champion of England?"

Black Ajax ventures into that currently most undiscussable of topics, black-white race relations. Not surprisingly (although it seems to have surprised Fraser) a plan to dramatise the novel for the American screen fell through; the subject was too sensitive. Fraser's Molineaux is not a comforting black athlete (like, for example, our beloved Frank Bruno) but, as his trainer says, a sassy, loudmouth nigger: a predecessor of Ali and Dennis Rodman, the in-your-face black basketball player with the violently dyed hair and the off-court habit (when not dating Madonna) of wearing dresses.

In their hearts, white spectators do not like to see rebellious black athletes win, and crave their comeuppance - think of the glee with which sections of the press reported Linnford Christie's humiliation in Atlanta. Like everything Fraser writes, *Black Ajax* is addictively readable. But it is also the first of his novels that can be termed genuinely disturbing.

PAPERBACKS

by Christopher Hirst

Desert Places by Robyn Davidson (Penguin, £7.99) This personal account of a trek with camels and nomads infects you with wanderlust and provides a bitter antidote. Within a page, Davidson can be both brilliant (the hindrances of Indian life are "like reading *Zizani Shand*") and rather silly - "cultures which touch their own faces have a greater understanding of... our alpha and omega".

Rogue Trader by Nick Leeson (Warner, £5.99) In this heavily ghosted memoir, Leeson reveals why he was keen to avoid incarceration in Singapore. He had been in a Singapore nick before, arrested for mooning. He switches

between family knees-ups and muck sweat at the looming black hole: "Since February I'd absorbed (ie "lost") £300m of funding."

Hilaire Belloc by AN Wilson (Mandarin, £9.99) Wilson offers a sprightly radical of the prolific author. Like most radical satirists, Belloc ended up as a crusty right-winger. Noisy and amusing, he held that civilisation depended on property-owning Catholicism. Equally eccentric was his technique with champagne corks: "Cut off flush with the bottle. Then pull out as an ordinary cork." Oddly, Belloc's *Cautionary Tales*, his only work still read, is allocated less than one page.

INDEPENDENT CHOICE



Pick of the week
Confessions of a Flesh Eater
by David Madsen (Dedalus)

FOODIE FICTION

by Chris Savage King

A crop of new novels centred on the theme of food reflect the way that the British have taken to gastronomy in recent years. Stylistically, they vary from wacky comedy to historical pastiche. Laurie Graham's delectably titled *Perfect Meringues* (Black Swan, £6.99) concerns the fortunes of TV cook Lizzie. As a 40-something minor celebrity, she should have it all. Instead, she tails men in supermarkets and makes doggy assignments with unpromising types called Bernard. She is haunted by her loquacious mother, and the rambling rhythms of the old woman's thought patterns are captured beautifully: "They said that your dad shouldn't keep syringing his ears, but they didn't have to live with him." Lizzie also has to cope with a sulky teenage daughter, "jacking off gormless Gavin while they're supposed to be revising". In the meantime, she rues the fact that Midlands fans are not yet ready for lumpfish caviar.

A typical modern woman, she has a gay man - astrologer Louie - for her best friend. He is the recipient of the most tender culinary gifts: "I made a mille-feuille of plums and pears, warmed it through in his oven, dusted it with icing sugar and served it with very cold Jersey cream."

Laurie Graham's choppy narrative has the feel of a hastily scrawled diary, complete with Must-Do lists - "Clear leaves out of gutter. Rabbit? Be a better mber. Move settle". Her comic touch is sure and psychologically accurate. In the dreaded Tonya, a dating-agency doyenne, Graham has created a truly memorable character. And her ear for media-speak is clear: "keep it simple, keep it nice, keep it badminton and Andrew Lloyd Webber". Her flippant wit at the expense of contemporary follies is cutting, while retaining a breezy good nature. If Victoria Wood wrote a novel, it might read something like this.

Fermentation by Angeline Jacob (Bloomsbury, £5.99) is a quite different confection - higher-toned, a kind of gastronomic, very French in flavour. The heroine becomes pregnant and develops insatiable cravings for cheese. Chapter headings take the names of cheeses, with lush descriptions of each. This is a slightly precious, but reasonable pretext for the heroine's dive into the realm of the senses, where erotic dreams and reality intermingle.

How you take the sex scenes will depend on how you feel about sub-dom fantasies with lashings of cuts and burns. But these are delicately enumerated, shielded in existential angst, showing the sense-of-humour bypass endemic to most effective pornography. A highly poetic narrator, Angeline Jacob (a pseudonym) is good at extended metaphors that mold the woman's pregnant body. Pregnancy, sensuality and sex are usually seen - antiseptically - as completely separate entities. The way the author has managed to blend all three is an impressive achievement.

David Madsen's *Confessions of a Flesh Eater* (Dedalus, £7.99) concerns cannibalism and parricide. It might be said to be the most in-your-face selection here, and is also the intellectual heavyweight. Orlando Crispie, a chef convinced of his own genius, writes his memoirs from jail, accused of the murder of Arturo Trogville - ace-rival and deadly restaurant critic.

Set in the present, the tale has all the grim foreboding of a genuine Gothic work. Its tone and emphasis owe much to James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, except that the touch is lighter. *Confessions* also helpfully includes actual recipes. Madsen has a thirst for clever-clever cross referencing, and there are enough operatic and literary names dropped to keep swots happy for hours. The knowing asides to "Herr Doktor Jung" and "retrojective significance" get tiresome, yet once David Madsen (another pseudonym) gets into his stride, his descriptive skills flourish.

Fans of body horror will find more visceral lusciousness here than in most synthetic US nasties. One of Crispie's talents is the ability to call up synaesthesia: the mixture of sense impressions. I liked the comparison of beef to brass in music and to "the sexual potency of young men before it had been squandered".

Orlando Crispie's gusto for copulating with carcasses retrieved from his restaurant's cold store, then serving them, is only rivalled by his heartfelt loathing for female flesh itself. Women are more fondly regarded by the chef as marionettes for his masterpieces.

Fermentation, by the way, is the only one of this batch that left me with a real appetite for food. Still, these sylvan-tending novels are more colourful and lively on the palate than the bald realism that has become a staple in fiction recently. *Salut* to all that, and bon appetit.

INDEPENDENT
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From arks to arson via

Sally Williams meets a swimming teddy and an arty octopus among the latest treats for the under-fives

Nerds come top in new teen novels. Nicholas Tucker applauds the anoraks



Charlie the Chicken: a pop up book by Nick Denchfield and Ant Parker (Macmillan, £5.99) The pop-ups in this story of a little chicken with a big appetite are so vast, Denchfield gets a "paper engineer" as well as writer's credit. Huge fold-away feet and beak to touch will amuse the very young. And there are missing words to guess: "Charlie the Chicken eats lots of barley. That's why he has such a big fat..." Tummy, of course.

Find and Fit Jungle by Emily Bolam (Campbell Books, £3.99) Young jigsaw-enthusiasts will enjoy this puzzle-cum-book. Pull out the figures of jungle animals and fit them into the pages as you read. Interactive and engaging, it's great for those who like to keep things ship-shape. But, take note, finding the lost cut-outs is a lot less fun than fitting them.

The Bird by Nicholas Allan (Hutchinson, £6.99) Another offbeat look at a classic story from the man who wrote *Jesus's Christmas Party*, an account of the Nativity from the viewpoint of the innkeeper. In this book a bird, who turns out to be the dove of peace, befriends a hermit and brings some friends back to his once solitary island: Noah and an ark-load of animals. Pocket-sized, with simple line drawings and water-colours, this is a funny and memorable book which blasts new energy into the Old Testament tale.

Nothing but Trouble by Gus Clarke (Andersen Press, £8.99) Young schoolchildren will find this story of Maisie's bad day very, very gratifying. Her baby brother wakes her up with a jab in the eye; she gets toothpaste on her cardigan; loathsome Dean splatters her with paint at school; a dog eats her ice-cream; and after she finds a caterpillar on her fork at teatime, the television breaks. Never mind. Tomorrow will be better. And it is. Almost. Surely, Mum will spot that Maisie has tucked her skirt into her knickers. Won't she?

Teddy's Busy Day by Lone Morton (Tango, £8.99) The pages of this book are like two-dimensional mini theatre sets. The protagonist, Teddy, a cut-out figure attached by a red ribbon, appears in each scene by being placed between the page and a clear plastic overlay. Dress him up as a clown at playgroup, take him swimming, and put him in the shower. Great for hand-eye co-ordination and reluctant readers.

Katie's Special Tooth by Dec Shulman (Oxford University Press, £8.99) All of Katie's friends have lost some teeth. All except Katie. Gemma and Emily have discussions about the tooth fairy and laugh gappy laughs when Katie is around. If it weren't pointed out that the writer had gone "into the field" to research this story, you could tell. The gloating is so merciless it could only be based on real children. Ditto the dialogue. "Do you think there are boy tooth fairies?" asks one boy "Course!", his friend replies. "Mine looks like Batman." This well-observed tale captures the competitive playground world.

One Bear, One Dog by Paul Strickland (Ragged Bears, £7.99) On each page in simple rhyme a new animal joins the bear, the dog, the mouse, the frog... on their way to look at YOU (in the shiny mirror on the last page). The pages are large and lustrous, the images simple and spirited. Great value.

Daisy's Giant Sunflower by Emma Damon (Thingo, £8.99) Daisy Bluehorn wants to grow a sunflower but Marvin Mole, Felix Fox and Polly Pig have other ideas. Luckily, Dougal Dog finds the perfect place for a seed to grow. Damon's writing is intelligent, her illustrations quirky. Her book comes with a height chart in the form of a flower in full bloom.

Katie Morag and the Grand Concert by Mairi Hedderwick (Bodley Head, £9.99) Feuding grannies, a lost brother, fiddle and pipe tunes, an uncle who says "Right Bobby Dazzling" without irony, home-made parsnip soup and island escapism for fans of wholesome heroine Katie Morag. Even the moments of ugly realism are charming when played against such a rural idyll. Children will like this; parents even more so.

When the Moon Comes Out by Francesca Simon, illustrated by Joanne Kosoff (Macmillan, £3.99) At night, if you didn't already know, zebras swing through trees; snakes dance the samba; koalas eat orange jelly; kangaroos fly kites. And here, in the most eye-catching of books, are lively, multicoloured portraits of the nocturnal shenanigans.

The Sea Hole by Ross Collins (Macmillan, £8.99) This story has many pluses: the intriguing idea that storms are caused by holes in the sea; an intrepid boy, Ben, sailing off in a tiny boat with his dog, to mend the hole; wonderful caricatures of fishermen; lots of fish and brilliant illustrations. The fact that Collins writes as he paints, with lots of colour and references to fish, can get a bit heavy going, but this is still gripping stuff.

Fluffy Chick by Rod Campbell (Campbell Books, £3.99) Rod Campbell gave up a career in science to pursue an interest in drawing furry animals. And his name is now a byword for ordered and precise design. Touch-and-feel with Fluffy Chick ("feel the pig's hairy ear", "feel the cow's rough tongue") has the same clear-cut appeal that has made his 100-plus "interactive" books so buyable.

Flora's McDonald's ABC (Walker Books, £10.99) A big, bright alphabet book full of startlingly beautiful images: a pin-sized ladybird on a huge yellow lemon; a speeding, Fifties pink Cadillac; a yak playing yo-yo. More appealing than a centrefold from the *River Cafe Cook Book*, this makes learning ABC a real treat.

Master Track's Train by Allan Ahlberg and Andre Amstutz (Puffin, £3.50) A lost child, a train full of stolen goods - this latest in the Happy Families series has all the ingredients that have made the other "miniature masterpieces" so much fun: feisty, off-the-wall individuals, a brisk plot, jaunty illustrations.

Goldfish Hide and Seek by Satoshi Kitamura (Andersen Press, £8.99) More nutty nonsense: a goldfish loses a playmate, but discovers a frog that sculpts; a fish doctor; two turtles playing chess; a hungry cat, and a love of dancing. The story is full of surprises and the characters, especially Mr Octopus the angst-ridden artist ("I see nothing but my art"), are joyfully eccentric. Crisp illustrations and an eye for the absurd: yet another wonderfully senseless book from Kitamura.

Nobody Likes Me by Fay Weldon (Bodley Head, £9.99) Weldon's first book for children goes straight to the turbulent heart of early childhood in this vivid story of a small boy fighting to be noticed.

From the opening outburst (when Rex rips up an invitation), parents will feel at home. The writing is full of colour: Rex's sleep is "brown and red and purple at the edges opening into patches". (Which is more than can be said for the moody but insipid illustrations.) This is a passionate and intense story that brilliantly takes us inside the mind of a troubled little boy.

The comparatively recent Darwinian shift from brute strength to high IQ as the best means for male survival in a hi-tech world is now also acknowledged in teenage fiction. Nerdy, puny dorks today currently often have the last fictional laugh on their playground tormentors and sometimes end up with the best girls as well. Jerry Spinelli's *Crash* (Orchard, £9.99) describes this particular situation from the bemused vantage point of a violent, fast-food consuming school football star who is finally bested by his vegetarian, turtle-loving, pacifist contemporary Penn Webb. After years of offering blows, insults and threats, the eponymous "Crash" Coogan finally realises that conservation causes and gentleness may seem more attractive to some than persistent success on the football pitch and swagging bravado afterwards. There is no overt preaching in this bright narrative; the American author gets his point across with good humour and deft skill at imitating teenage speech styles.

Greg Paulsen also celebrates the relentless rise of the geek in *The Schernoff Discoveries* (Macmillan paperback, £3.99). His cerebral hero Harold dresses like a 30-year-old accountant, with "enough ballpoints in his shirt pocket to supply an entire classroom and glasses so thick that when he turned to look straight at you it seemed that his eyes exploded". There is an autobiographical flavour to this loosely connected story, where Harold researches how to attract girls, earn enough money in a weekend to buy a car, and thwart the standard, pea-brained playground bully. He is usually successful without straining credibility, and this, too, is a lively story, far in atmosphere from the same author's epics about surviving single-handed in the Canadian wilderness during a savage winter.

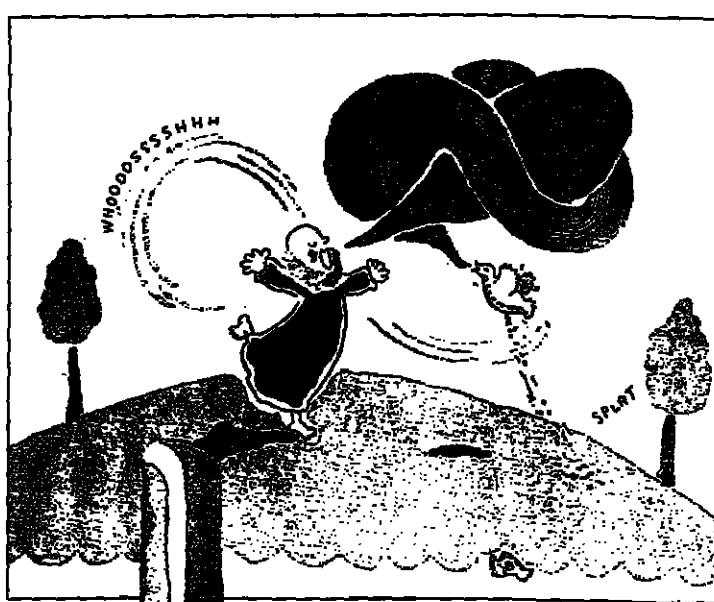
Events turn darker in Anthony Masters' *Wicked* (Orchard, £9.99). This features teenage twin brothers, but the main character is Josh, the younger son who is always at risk of being left out. Something has gone badly wrong: the twins look hag-ridden, and their occasional fights take on a new ferocity. Josh has to find out what is happening, and suspension is stretched almost to breaking-point before the discovery of a genuinely nasty cover-up. The story ends on an unnecessary note of melodrama from an author who is otherwise improving all the time. There is a nightmare quality here that is both gripping and believable. Josh himself finally resolves everything because of his essential goodness - not a quality often described or celebrated in children's books in these more cynical times.

Sharon Creech is an American writer who has lived in Britain since 1979. *Chasing Redbird* (Macmillan, £9.99) is set in a remote corner of Kentucky specialising in an inbred type of eccentricity sometimes stretching to rank insanity. Thirteen-year-old Zinny, a Cinderella character temporarily

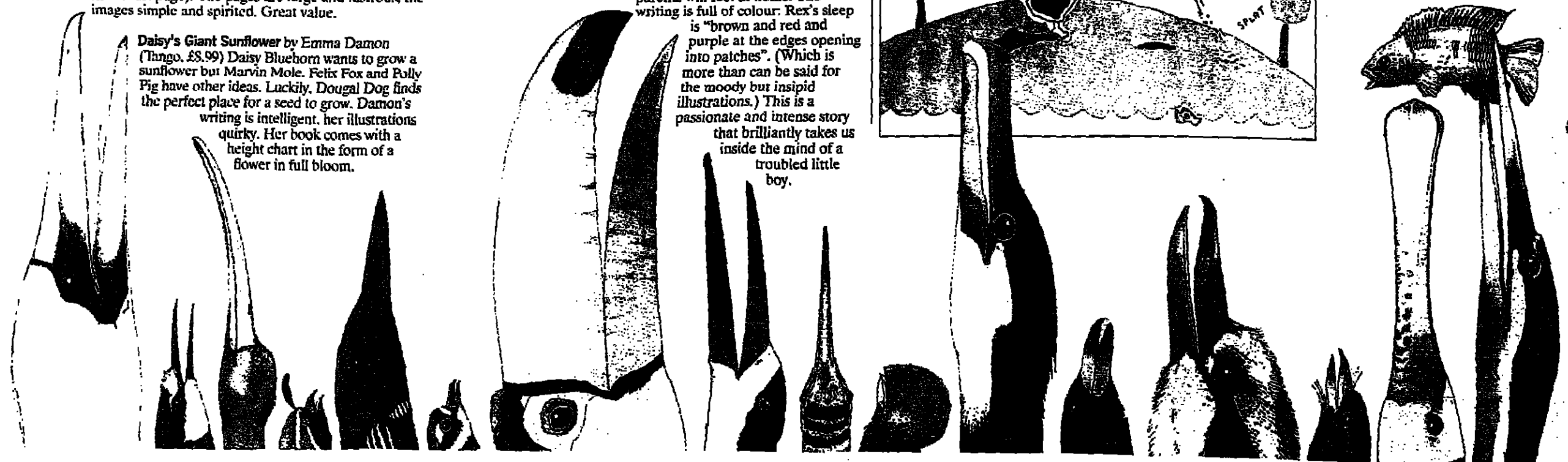
eclipsed by her more beautiful older sisters, discovers an old trail behind her farmhouse. Exploring this entails days away from home on her own, permission for which is granted by her strangely acquiescent parents. Yet all the time she is being shadowed by her ill-used boyfriend, who manages to win her confidence only in the final chapters. This self-absorbed story drags at times, but may well find an echo in teenage readers who are at the same stage of adolescent egocentricity.

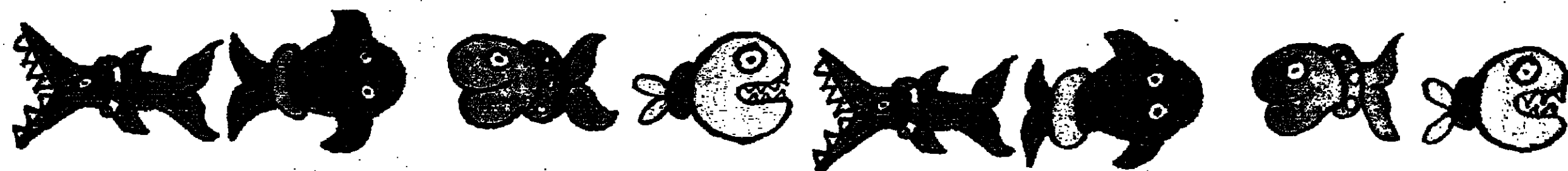
Carole Lloyd's *A Game of Consequence* (Dolphin paperback, £3.00) also has a moody teenage girl as heroine. Her entire family moves away from the town following the unexpected legacy of a cottage in the deep countryside. They are met by smells of silage, some delinquent local teenagers, a house that is terminally falling down and a complete absence of any fairy godmother to put everything right with one touch of a magic wand. In time the parents' marriage goes sour and Rosie takes up with a home-grown thief and tearaway, somehow avoiding an unplanned pregnancy before her lover does a predictable bunk. The last section of this story falls into the same depression shared by Rosie herself, leaving a sad sense of anticlimax. But Carole Lloyd is a good writer, and young readers will surely respect the honesty she brings to describing Rosie's situation and the slow recovery she eventually makes.

George Layton's first book, *The Fib*, was published 20 years ago and has since sold a quarter of a million copies. Its successor, *The Swap and Other Stories* (Macmillan, £9.99) is just as good, and well worth waiting for. Set in the Fifties, it is written in the rueful school of childhood hard knocks perfected by Bill Naughton, with whom Layton can stand comparison. The 11-year-old hero - known to his formidable charlatry mother as "His Lordship" - has a series of mini-adventures where somehow he always comes off worst. There is the tree-house he falls out of, the Art Prize he should not have won, and the Jewish schoolfriend he cannot quite bring himself to defend against the school bully. All this comes over vividly and without a shred of self-pity. Money is tight but humour is always there. This is a book about childhood as well as for children, and equally successful on both counts.



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dorks, yaks and turkeys



Christina Hardyment chooses audiobooks guaranteed to prevent bickering in the back during those long summer car journeys

Audiobooks can be a painless way of restoring the guts to children's classics oversimplified by Ladybird or graphically distorted by Disney. There is much more to Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (Naxos, 2hrs 40mins, £7.99) than a silly wooden puppet with an elastic nose and a moribund Jiminy Cricket. It is a highly dramatic Italian morality tale, funny, sad, occasionally horrific, which is much more relevant than it used to be now that all parents are permissive and pension plans look more and more like pie in the sky. Anglo-Saxons and warm-hearted Latins alike have to appeal to the inner conscience of their over-indulged children to make them turn from the evil temptations of leisure and buckle down to work, so they can support their indigent parents in their old age. John Sessions handles a glorious bouquet of contrastingly-accented characters quite brilliantly.

Both films of Dodie Smith's legendary 1956 story of spotted hounds and Cruella de Vil had their merits. But the spoken word version of *101 Dalmatians* (LFE, 2hrs, £7.99) includes several splendid canine characters omitted in the film versions and much more of the author's wryly humorous voice, articulated with finishing-school clarity and perfect pace by Joanna Lumley. This is a timely re-release of a recording made 15 years ago; it would be interesting to see if the post-*Ab Fab* Lumley would have handled it differently.

Gabriel Woolf started by reading abridged versions of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* books on Radio 4's *Story Time*. He has now graduated to a true labour of love: recording and marketing his own abridgements of all 12 of the books on cassette.

The risks of receiving loud raspberries from Ransome's intensely loyal fans were great, but Woolf has exactly the right voice to cope with duffers and pirates alike, and can casually toss off impossible asides such as "jibboons and bobsays" or "barbecued billygoats" without a hint of self-consciousness. In *Pigeon Post* (4hrs, £12, including postage and packing, from K Adams, 71 Stepping Stones

Road, Coventry, CV5 8JT; tel 01203 592231), he perfectly captures both Nancy's blunt, headstrong honesty, and Titty's desperate terror of dowsing.

Kaye Umansky puts a huge amount of witty wellie into her retelling of the impossibly hackneyed and deeply unconvincing story of the Frog Prince. Her *The Frog Prince* (Cavalcade, 1hr 24 mins, £7.99) is perfectly suited to the spoken word, since the story's running joke is the way the ghastly Prince Pipequeak's gratuitously offensive tone of voice "cuts into conversations like a hedge-cutter through privet". Comedian Sandi Toksvig is given plenty of scope to show off all her bounce and ebullience. Whether the Princess Petulant was worth the winning is another matter.

Anne Fine's award-winning *The Tulip Touch* (Chivers, 3hrs 22mins, £15.95) is a taut little tale of a menacing and sinister little girl called Tulip which slowly but inexorably builds up to a horrific climax. This unabridged recording, read by Rula Lenska, is definitely not one to choose to soothe the children off to sleep. Try it on a car journey; you won't hear a cheep out of them for three chilling hours or more.

Lighten the mood with giggles over *The Lost Diary of Erik Bloodaxe*, Viking Warrior (Collins, 90 mins, + pbk, £7.99). I'm not normally a fan of the new tabloid-style nudge-nudge wink-wink history books, but this one is so outrageously punny, even Fratchettesque, that I found myself enjoying it. Read aloud, some of its doggerel verse has an impressive ear for

the lilt of the sagas ("Swordmetal shone/shields shattered/ Death danced abroad/ On that fell field"), and it is in fact a historically respectable account of the Viking invasions into Europe and Russia.

Lynn Reid Banks has a marvellously true ear for a child's view of the world: in *Harry The Poisonous Centipede* (HarperCollins, 90mins, £3.99), read, very well indeed, by the author, she also succeeds in putting across the insect's point of view. Just the thing for a child fearful of creepy-crawlies and things that go bump in the night. But, like *The Tulip Touch*, this is not one for late-night listening, especially if you're anywhere remotely tropical.

What will send them off to sleep soothed and happy are Dick King-Smith's six nicely turned tales of the sturdy little would-be "lady farmer" who is the heroine of *Sophie's Snail* (Cover to Cover, 35mins, £3.99). Flocks of free-range woodlice and herds of snails are just the beginning; a cow called Blossom, hens called April and May and a Shetland pony are all part of her diminutive dreams. Read with unruffled rural dignity by Bernard Cribbins.

Dignity is not what Lenny Henry aims for and not what cheeky little Charlie, heroine of *Charlie and the Big Chill* (Gollancz, £9.95) gets in this simple, predominantly pictorial story which is given irresistible funky add-ons as a read/sing/dance-along-with-combo. The story, written and read by Henry and exuberantly illustrated by Chris Burke, is read with the full range of special effects on one side; the other is recorded more simply for reading aloud, with page-turn bells, but ends up with a bonus bit of "Charlie's disco music". Short but sweet.

Poetry is one of the greatest joys of spoken word, and Benjamin "syntax in my dreadlocks" Zephaniah is one of the best living poets writing for children. *Funky Turkeys* (ABM, approximately 1hr, £6.99) is made up of selections from two of his Penguin collections: *Talking Turkeys* and *Funky Chickens*. Read by the man himself with infectious relish, it'll have the children, and you too, clicking your fingers and swaying in time to the razor-sharp rapping and grooving. Way to go, campers.

Always look on the dark side of life: doom and gloom in teenage fiction

On 16 July, the Library Association's annual Carnegie Medal will be awarded to the year's outstanding book. The 1997 shortlist includes stories describing drug-taking (*Junk* by Melvin Burgess), arson, suspected murder (Anne Fine's *The Tulip Tree*), and the type of merciless bullying that can sometimes lead to suicide (Michael Coleman's *Weirdo's War*). Last year's offerings were not that different in subject matter, and some commentators are now questioning this inexorable drift towards gloom in children's literature. Things have certainly changed from the time when even such events as the Second World War were largely ignored in the juvenile books published during that period.

But it would be wrong to write off today's new frankness as literary sensationalism, with authors flouting former taboos just for the sake of it. Parental restrictions on what their offspring should both hear and see are increasingly a thing of the past, now that the majority of older children have television sets in their own bedrooms. Modern children know quite a lot now about the worst that can happen in the world. It is only natural that they also want to find out more about the ways that different types of personal or social disaster can sometimes hit the young as well.

It is here that contemporary teenage books and comics can fill a significant information gap. Television, for all its outspokenness, is still unable by its very statutes to describe in any reasonable detail some of the more controversial areas of childhood or children's behaviour. "Flipping Heck!" is the closest that characters in *Grange Hill* are allowed to get to the obscene language so wearily familiar to public transport users when pupils are travelling between home and school. Recreational drug-taking, of the type that takes place in teenage parties every weekend, would be equally unthinkable as a subject for children's television.

Ignoring such behaviour does not mean that it will go away. Teenagers know this better than most. That is why, when asked, they do say they want to know more about Aids, sexual behaviour and different forms of abuse - but not necessarily from embarrassed parents or teachers. Time for the lid-lifting novel or magazine specifically directed at the young, which can be read and reread in the unique privacy of the reading experience.

So anyone who tried to reimpose restrictions on language or subject matter in teenage stories would be attempting to put an increasingly independent cat back into the secrecy of a bag that has long fallen to bits. The dilemma comes when assessing how old children should be before they are confronted with all the darker truths about human beings. Those many younger children who watch television after the 9pm watershed will know some of these already. Others may not, and parents, teachers and librarians now have some tricky decisions to make with readers aged between nine and 13 who are faced by the no-holds-barred juvenile novel of today.

The German author Gudrun Pausewang, for example, has written one novel describing a horrific nuclear disaster, and another detailing a Jewish girl's terrible journey in a cattle truck to her death in a concentration camp. Robert Cormier, a best-selling American novelist, specialises in stories where unsupported, decent child characters are humiliated, beaten up and sometimes killed by bullies, terrorists or psychopaths.

Many would still wish to keep compelling, long-drawn-out descriptions of the death of hope away from pre-teenage readers at an impressionable age. In public libraries, such books are often grouped with adult fiction, though there is no uniformity as yet about the age at which a child should qualify as an adult borrower.

Not all modern books written for teenagers are so controversial, and neither is every prizewinner. Even so, when the Carnegie award is announced, it could be important to listen carefully to what the publishers suggest as the winner's target age-range.

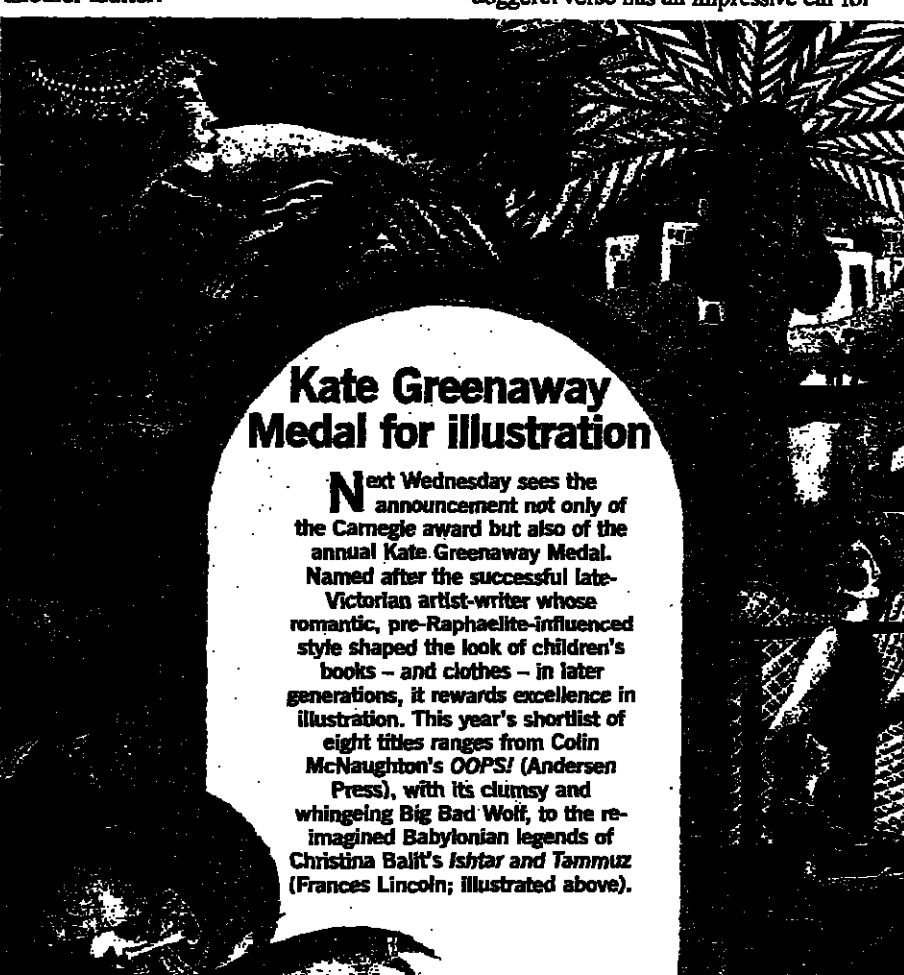
Nicholas Tucker

Illustrations

Clockwise from top right: fish frieze by Joanne Kossoff and Francesca Simon in 'When the Moon Comes Out' (Macmillan); frock horror as Katie Morag catches a glimpse of Agnes - 'she was sitting in the front row, wearing the exact same dress' - in 'Katie Morag and the Grand Concert' by Mairi Hedderwick (Bodley Head); Paul Strickland's bear and his entourage in 'One Bear, One Dog' (Ragged Bears); 'warmth and life pours into all creation' in 'Ishtar and Tammuz' by Christina Balit (Frances Lincoln); fine, beautifully drawn illustrations of the bird kingdom decorate Helen Ward's modern adaptation of a traditional tale in 'King of the Birds' (Templar Publishing); a dove makes something of an impression on a lonely hermit in 'The Bird' by Nicholas Allan (Hutchinson); A is for ants and alligators in Flora McDonnell's exuberant 'ABC' (Walker Books); two small French children and their wicked dog, Zaza, create mayhem as they wander through town looking for a birthday present, 'Mama's Perfect Present' by Diane Goode (Andersen Press) is the bilingual sequel to 'Where's Our Mama?'

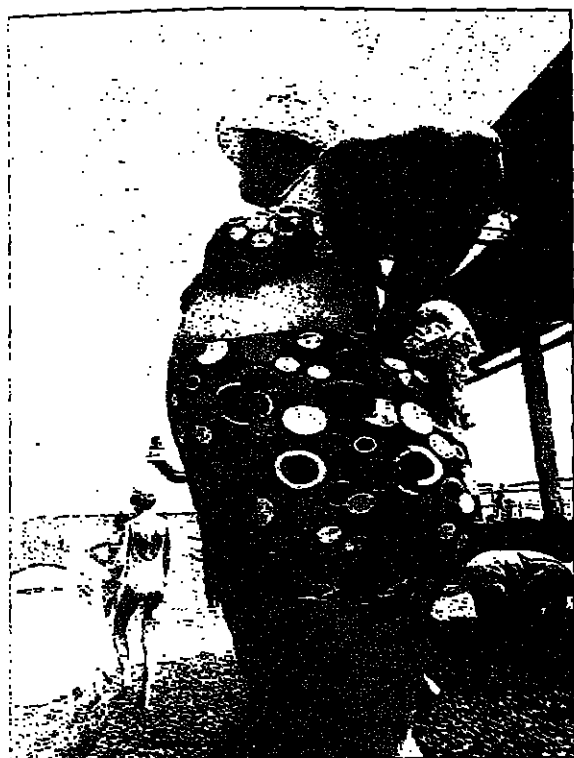
Kate Greenaway Medal for illustration

Next Wednesday sees the announcement not only of the Carnegie award but also of the annual Kate Greenaway Medal. Named after the successful late-Victorian artist-writer whose romantic, pre-Raphaelite-influenced style shaped the look of children's books - and clothes - in later generations, it rewards excellence in illustration. This year's shortlist of eight titles ranges from Colin McNaughton's *COPS!* (Andersen Press), with its clumsy and whingeing Big Bad Wolf, to the re-imagined Babylonian legends of Christina Balit's *Ishtar and Tammuz* (Frances Lincoln; illustrated above).



travel & outdoors

Margate meets the Black Sea



Richard McClure joins the annual parade of beach babushkas at the Crimean resort of Yalta – which has an unlikely British twin

The Crimea is proud of its Chekhov connection. Dying of tuberculosis in the 1890s, the playwright came to live in Yalta at his doctor's insistence. Each of the dachas where he spent his final years has been preserved as a museum and, in spring, the resort holds a week-long festival of parades and plays – choosing to ignore the fact that Chekhov hated the place.

"A hot Siberia... there is nothing here to interest me," the exile complained in letters to Moscow, while, in *Ivanov*, he berated Russian doctors for sending their patients south: "As soon as any housewife clears her throat, it's out with the scientific prescription – off to the Crimea."

Travelling overland to Yalta a century later, it's easy to imagine far worse remedies. As soon as the train starts rattling slowly across the sliver of land that attaches the peninsula to southern Ukraine, you can sense the Crimea's therapeutic powers. Drab grasslands give way to fruit trees and fields of tangled vines, then pine-forested mountains that lurch towards the Black Sea, protecting the coastal towns from north winds and delivering a climate closer to that of Cannes than of Kiev.

If Chekhov found the place culturally deficient, then other visitors are happy to settle for these natural attractions. Long before the Communists declared the Crimea a workers' paradise, Pushkin and Tolstoy convalesced along its shores and the tsars built opulent summer homes high on the wooded hillsides. There are enough literary dachas and imperial palaces remaining near Yalta to while away many an hour, but the more proletarian pleasures of the town's Lenin Embankment can prove equally distracting.

Part dockyard, part gaudy seafront and part elegant boulevard, the broad promenade is the town's bustling hub, an unlikely meeting of St Petersburg and Margate (with which Yalta is twinned). By mid-afternoon, a conveyor belt of post-Communist life courses along its length. Holidaying children clamber off dodgers to pose for photographs with manacled monkeys; leather-jacketed *mafiosi* lounge in restaurants ordering bottles of unbearably sweet Crimean sparkling wine; while stout army officers loiter in Lenin Square with its vast statue of Vladimir Ilyich looking out to the Black Sea where Bolsheviks once drowned the Yalta bourgeoisie.

In early summer, the sea was out of reach. Motorboats perched on the



Peoples' pleasure: the robust bathers of southern Ukraine

quayside held the promise of idle cruising but all inquiries were met with shakes of the head.

"The economy is down," shrugged Arnold, a silver-haired bather I met in the drowsy village of Gruzuf, a few miles along the coast. "Things are very bad right now. No gasoline, so no boats." An ill-judged business deal had brought Arnold, a Muscovite, to Gruzuf but the climate had persuaded him to stay on and he passed his time keeping trim and playing chess ("There are two grandmasters in Gruzuf alone – just think of the challenge!").

After completing his quota of press-ups on the beach, he led the way to Chekhov's dacha, which I had been struggling to find. The simple, whitewashed building stood on the water's edge, shaded by a single palm, its garden as languid as the dramatist's prose. One of its rooms had been turned into a makeshift gallery where a young painter, Sergei, was hanging apocalyptic pictures. His anguished manner suggested he, too, had come to convalesce, and he pointed out his living quarters, the Artists' Home, an

imposing sanatorium tucked beneath a rockface.

The hills surrounding Yalta abound with these sanatoria, half-hidden by rows of cypress trees. As you ride the bus along the coastal road, every bend



gives glimpses of tennis courts or trim lawns belonging to some of the 160 "therapeutic resort establishments" listed in the *Intourist* guidebook (which also suggests visits to such uninviting landmarks as the Sechenov Research Institute for Climatotherapy and the Semashko Resort Out-Patient Clinic).

I opted instead for a morning's uphill hike through Yalta's maze of mustard-coloured houses to Livadia Palace. A courtly building of Inkerman stone and secluded terraces, Livadia was built by Nicholas II as his favoured retreat from impending revolution. In 1945, Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt were installed here, carving up Europe in its marble halls, and the palace is now a museum devoted to these twin roles. Its quiet rooms are filled with conference memorabilia and Romanov trinkets, closely guarded by Livadia's present-day occupants – a small army of headscarved wardens sporting pink lipstick and gold teeth.

It was Stalin who shaped the Crimea of today. Until 1944, Tartars had lived here in their hundreds of thousands, ancestors of the Golden Horde. Overnight, they were deported to central Asia and replaced with Russians and Ukrainians, continuing a tradition of ethnic cleansing which has seen Greeks, Goths and Italians inhabit the peninsula.

With independence, Tartars are slowly returning, but I saw none in

Yalta and the locals showed no interest in their non-Slavic heritage. "You shouldn't go there," one advised me when I asked about the ruined Genoese and Venetian trading forts east of Yalta. "There is nothing to see."

Make the trip to Sudak regardless and you'll be rewarded with spectacular battlements straddling a colossal headland. Closer inspection reveals the 14th-century ramparts to be held together with generous amounts of concrete, but the view from the cliff top makes up for any disappointment. The sight of dolphins far below brings true appreciation of the Crimea's restorative beauty – until you remember that it wasn't just silks and caviar that were shipped from Sudak. The Black Death began here too, wiping out three-quarters of the peninsula's Europeans before slipping aboard merchant vessels and laying waste to a continent.

Perhaps because of this considerable blot on their region's copybook, the Crimeans' devotion to health and fitness is robust, a fact reinforced the next morning when I was awakened by blaring loud-speakers and the rumble of coaches. It turned out to be the arrival *en masse* of the region's "daily bathers", a mature but lively contingent who had travelled from as far as Sevastopol for their annual congress and fancy dress parade.

Soon a bemused crowd had gathered on Lenin Embankment to watch their Olympic-style medal ceremonies and spirited displays of aerobics. One over-excited gruntna skipped with glee, pausing only to execute impeccable headstands; another took the microphone to warble a stirring anthem. Eventually, track suits were removed and modesty put aside. Accompanied by a procession of flame-haired babushkas in leopardskin bikinis and Viking horns snaked along the pebble beach, and cheers rang out as they waded into the still-cold water.

Yalta is a tricky place to reach. You have to make first for Simferopol, served by air from Istanbul or Kiev, or by train from Kiev. From Simferopol there is a tram – taking two hours to cover 55 miles – or a bus. Good luck. All foreigners travelling to Ukraine require a visa. You can obtain this in advance direct from the Ukrainian Embassy at 78 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2PL (tel 0171-727 6312; fax 0171-792 1708; recorded voice information 0891 515919).



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Real men don't wear togs

Simon Calder joins the gentlemen bathers in Ireland's Forty Foot Pool



Undressed to chill: a brave woman amongst the traditionally all-male entries to the Forty Foot Pool

If the passengers on this morning's high-speed ferry from Holyhead to Dún Laoghaire care to glance to port as they approach the Irish shore, they may catch a glimpse of a small, round tower – looking like an only slightly overgrown escapee from the corner square of a chess board. It acts as a beacon for bathers drawn to the most absurd swimming-pool in the British Isles.

I suspect that most occasional sea bathers share the following criteria for a decent dip: the water should be clear and warm; getting in and out should not require any great effort and/or contortion; there should be a private place to change, preferably with a hot shower.

The Forty Foot Pool meets none of these conditions, yet it is as popular as it is ridiculous. If you wander along the shore just south of Dún Laoghaire expecting to find a gently shelving circular pool with a diameter of approximately 40ft, filled with sea-water that has at least lost its chill to the tentative sun, you will be as disappointed as I was.

The costume-clutching novice is first greeted with some serious signs. "Gentlemen's Bathing Place" instructs a notice which has evidently been there for decades, ground down by the fine, salty mist that represents fall-out from the pool. A less permanent sign perched close

to an old tin roof may or may not be present, depending on the time of day you attend: "Togs must be worn".

The Forty Foot Pool is a subject of much controversy in Dublin society, polite or otherwise. Its name has no correlation with its dimension, instead being a reference to the 40th Foot Regiment of the British Army, which for a time was stationed at the Martello Tower. The troops performed their ablutions naked, creating a precedent followed by local civilians. Men only, mind.

Gradually a notion permeated even the most conservative corners of Catholic Ireland: that women should be permitted equality of access to recreational facilities such as the Forty Foot Pool. The gentlemen bathers were shocked at the idea of women observing, let alone partaking in, their naked rituals. So a solution was devised: from dawn to 9am togs need not be worn; beyond that, the sign goes up.

What, you wonder as you wander down past the open-plan shed that serves as the (un-) dressing room, was all the fuss about? The "pool" opens up on to the Irish Sea in all its grot. Rocks seem to jostle you as you pick your way unsteadily towards the murky water, the same troubled grey as the leaden midsummer skies. A few betogged gentlemen bathers dive casually from some of the bigger

boulders into the swirling, gloomy sea that collides frequently and violently with the shore.

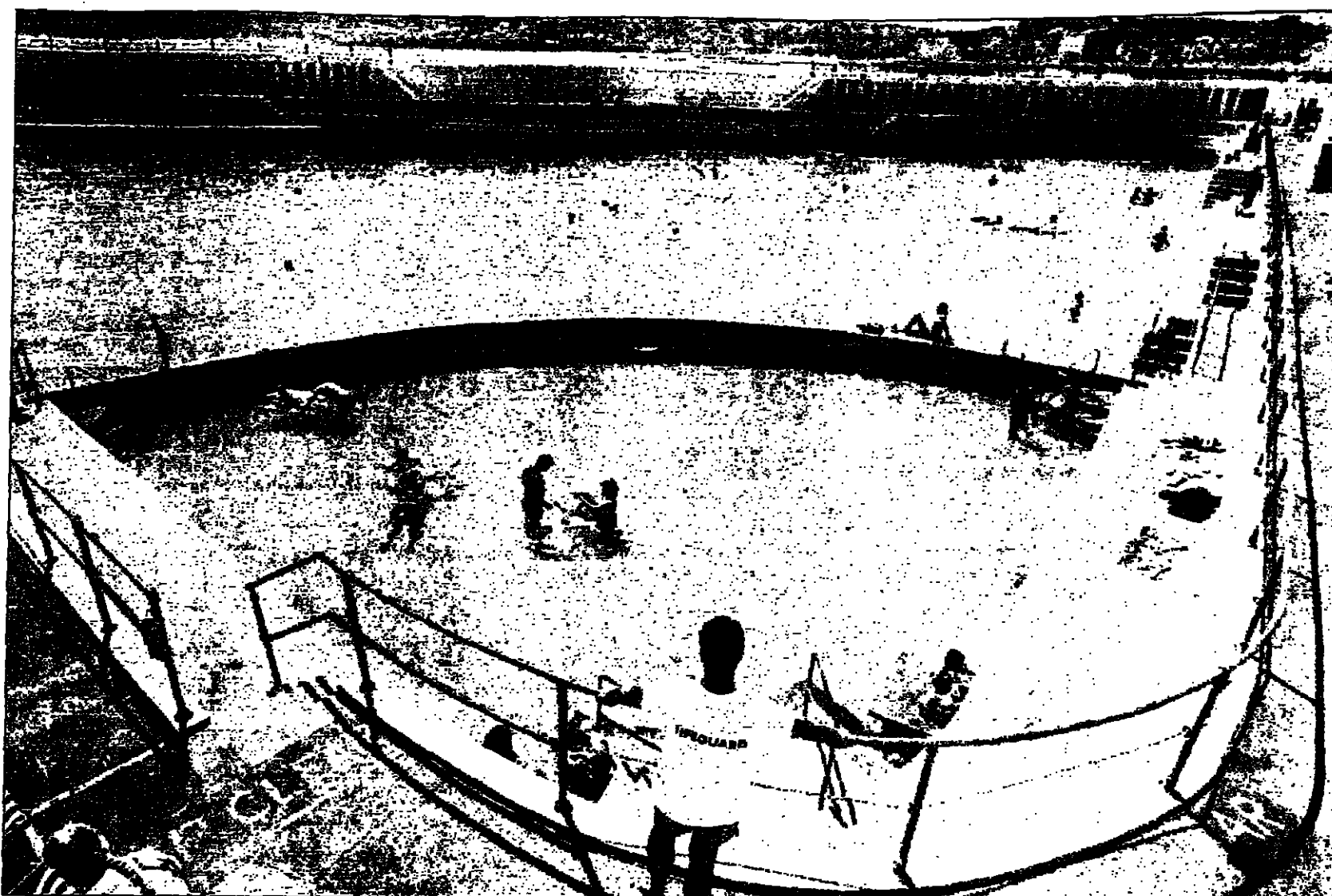
Your turn. A precarious handrail invites you to descend into the water, but gradual immersion is not a realistic option. Yet after trepidation has ratcheted to a maximum, the plunge is bracing rather than beastly. The Irish Sea doesn't exactly caress you, but neither does it fling you straight back to the rocks. A few tacks, a gulp or two of worryingly tangy water and you have passed the Forty Foot test.

Now you have the confidence to turn up on Christmas Day, when the location is packed with frosty forty-footers. But perhaps you have suffered enough, and deserve a touristic antidote. Remember that tower? Once the residence of James Joyce, it served as location for the opening scene of *Ulysses* and now houses the James Joyce Museum. The writer's death mask stares blankly, curiously offsetting the dense prose of his letters and first editions. The view from the roof takes in Howth, on the far side of Dublin Bay, as well as the strident Wicklow Hills. And, down at the shore, some shameless, shivering show-offs.

Simon Calder takes a plunge into the Forty Foot Pool for 'The Travel Show' on BBC2 at 8.30pm on 21 July

The sensational art of swimming

Penzance's lido is a Modernist marvel.
Stephen Wood dips into a pool of restored glory



Period piece: the Jubilee Pool opened 60 years ago and became a protected building in 1993
PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN REIDMAN

The morning was grim, clouds forming, a gloomy dome where the sky should have been. The view was grim, too. Below the promenade, the concrete semicircle of a derelict lido pushed out into the sea. In the middle of the pool's stagnant water stood a vase-shaped fountain, long dead, its old blue paintwork stained with rusty streaks.

Having spent half the night driving to the West Country – and the rest half-asleep in the back of the car – I was determined to investigate the lido, which opened in 1935 and closed 60 years later. Leaning over the promenade railings, I could see that it would not be a problem to get in: as I looked down, a woman about the same age as the lido (but in much better condition) walked across the apron in a bathing costume, pulled on a rubber cap, waded into the murky water and began to swim around the perimeter.

I followed her route down the steps from the promenade, pushed open the unlocked gate with its "No admittance" sign, and walked on to the poolside. Here the view was better – and worse. The two fountains flanking the steps into the pool were in an even sorer state than the one in the middle; but the rather plain, Moderne-style building housing the ticket office and changing-rooms had charming decorative friezes along the lip of the "Sunbathing Terraces" and on the porches.

With a lick of paint, a few more customers and some sunshine, it would have been wonderful. Instead it was just depressing. Luckily this lido, Plymouth's Tinside pool, was not the one for which I had driven down from London.

The year in which the Tinside pool opened was the height of Britain's lido boom. The London County Council led the way: having already approved the building of pools in the Victoria and Brockwell parks, it announced a programme for seven more. That year pools also opened at Ilkley, Norwich, Peterborough, Saltsdon and Aylesbury.

Partly this growth was a response to demand, caused by the twin Twenties crazes for sunbathing and cross-channel swimming. But it was also motivated by public concern for health and fitness: an Army recruiting drive that year revealed that only 38 per cent of applicants could meet the minimal requirements of the physical test. Hence at the grand opening of the Jubilee Pool in Penzance, in May 1935, Alderman Treganza stressed the health benefits it would offer: "There can hardly be a better form of bodily exer-

cise than swimming... all the muscles are brought into action," he proclaimed (to shouts of "Hear, hear", according to the report in *The Cornishman*).

The lido boom lasted until the Second World War. Thereafter, rival attractions (including, ultimately, cheap package holidays) sent Britain's big open-air pools into terminal decline. In 1991, the Thirties Society published a booklet, *Farewell My Lido*, which reported that despite the "delightful and evocative architecture" of these period pieces, budget-cutting in the Eighties had meant that "only a handful still survive, and... none is free from threat". From its survey, it picked out a few as case studies. Tinside was not among them ("No threat of closure" was the judgement then); the lidos at Finchley in London and Penzance's Jubilee Pool were both being judged to be "in the balance".

Finchley's two pools – one an extravagantly styled children's pool with a cascade flanked by arcades and lion's-mouth waterspouts – have now disappeared, along with the sunbathing lawns. In their place is a Nineties leisure centre including, along with fast-food outlets, shops and multiplex cinema, two pleasant new indoor pools and a pitifully small outdoor swimming-bath.

At Penzance, the balance has swung the other way. The huge Jubilee Pool has not only survived, but is in a sensational condition. What *The Cornishman* judged at its opening to be "a work of art" (hear, hear) has been restored so beautifully as easily to justify driving half the night to see it.

When I arrived in Penzance, the weather was as stunning as the view. Beyond the delicate entrance arch, at the eastern end of the promenade, sunlight sparkled on a million gallons of sea-water filling the Jubilee Pool. The paintwork around the pool was ultra-ultramarine, putting the surrounding Mounts Bay to shame. The pool's almost-triangular shape jets out into the bay. Its decision was inspired, so the architect claimed, by the sight of a seagull landing on the sea; but the pool in fact looks like the bow of a great ocean liner (a more suitably Modernist image, since one of Le Corbusier's early inspirations was the design of liners).

The architect, Capt Frank Latham, Penzance's borough engineer, built the pool walls using existing rocks as its foundation. As a result, the design combines the hard edges of Modernism with, along the sea walls, the natural curves of the rocks. The flat, rendered surfaces of Modernist buildings always look terrible when the paintwork is worn, superb when it is fresh: the Persil-wash white on the Jubilee Pool's sea walls was so dazzling that their subtle contours would have been elusive but for the shadows cast by the afternoon sun. The beauty, as breathtaking as that of the Alps or

Milan's San Siro football stadium, made me want to do something about it. So I did. The water was breathtaking, too.

Braced, I retired to the Yacht Inn across the road. Also a Thirties building (apart from the new plastic window-frames), this was the perfect place to stay. From my bedroom at the front of the building I could see the Jubilee Pool last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

The following day was a Saturday. I paid my £1.50 entrance fee (a bargain: what other Grade II listed building charges so little, and lets you swim in it?) to join the crowd of noisy children inside. On a good day, the Jubilee Pool has attracted as many as a thousand paying

customers since it reopened in 1994, and this day was looking good. The water, topped up at high tide through the sluices (which now have grilles on them to stop fish getting into the pool), was still bracing; but that only added to the volume of the yells as children flew down the water-slide into the depths. The atmosphere recalled childhood memories of Finchley lido, the only rogue element being the sound of the seagulls.

"Rogue" is the right word. By midday, the trickle of people bringing chips back from the caravan café parked up by the promenade had developed into a stream. One family unwisely offered a couple of chips to a seagull; a flock of colleagues

descended, and – like a scene from Hitchcock's *The Birds* – tried to break the whole lot. Luckily, their three-year-old knew what to do, charging at the gulls to reclaim the family chips.

I spent the day swimming a few lengths (a geometric puzzle in a triangular pool), sunning myself on the whiter-than-white concrete surrounds, eating chips and admiring the magnificent, German-quality fittings in stainless-steel – a precaution against the corrosive effects of seawater.

Ten years ago this lido was heading the same way



Jubilantly restored, Penzance's lido
PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN WOOD

The losers from this week's strike by British Airways cabin crew range from hapless and bemused foreign visitors who arrived at Heathrow airport on Wednesday at dawn only to find they were flying nowhere, to the Terminal One concessionaires whose market for socks, snacks and Scotch evaporated.

The winner is likely to be the domestic travel industry in the British Isles. The strike coincided with the sort of exceptionally warm weather that bestows even the most exposed east coast resort with Mediterranean airs. Hot, bothered travellers who find the chance of flying to Nice is nil are likely to turn to home ground.

In this spirit, these pages celebrate today the lido, from Penzance via Margate (or at least its Slavic twin) to County Dublin. The spur, of course, was the discovery this week in the occupied West Bank of the world's oldest swimming pool, proprietor King Herod. I bet he didn't have to contend with floating plaster, crisp packets and the other bits of debris that bob about in my local lido.

The closest I ever got to working for British Airways cabin crew was a job as cleaner at the airline's offices at Gatwick. But had I

progressed further up the career ladder than the cleaning cupboard, I might have been miffed by some of the responses invited on the in-flight questionnaires that BA hands out to passengers.

"Cabin crew didn't make you feel special or valued", is one possible answer. "Cabin crew served you in a hurried and stressful manner" is another. True, the converses are offered, but I still think that they might have invited passengers to tick a box saying that staff "sounded as though they didn't know what was going on". In a week of chaos at Britain's airports, perhaps some of the striking crew may be tempted to replace the word "cabin crew" with "BA management".

At least BA staff may be a little more relaxed than their counterparts at Cameroon Airlines, which advertises: "During your flight you will appreciate the comfort of our Boeing 747 Combi and the constant anxiety of our crew."

The questionnaire was handed to me on a flight back from Bangkok, where I spent a disproportionate amount of time in a single street: Khao San Road, a one-stop shopping arcade for travellers. What 20 years ago was an unremarkable thoroughfare amid the urban confusion north of the Royal



Simon Calder

Ever found that, in an apparently pristine newspaper bought in Bangkok, the crossword has been completed?

Palace is now lined with travel agencies and stores selling imitation Rolexes with a life expectancy of about a fortnight.

There is also, at number 136, a newsagent offering foreign-language newspapers. Finding a copy of the *Poole & Dorset Advertiser* on sale a day after publication was a big surprise. A passing traveller noted my astonishment and

said that the cleaning staff at Bangkok's Don Muang airport routinely collect abandoned newspapers from incoming planes, iron them and sell them on to hotels and news agencies. Can anyone corroborate this – or have you ever bought an apparently pristine newspaper in Bangkok, only to find that the crossword is completed? Answers on a newly ironed postcard.

"Hitch-hiking when truanting seems a perfectly fatuous exercise," writes Alfred Bouch of Tunbridge Wells in response to my request for tales of the road. "And since fatality has its own attraction, I would like to contribute my own most pointless journey. Which he does."

In the mid-Sixties, after an evening's beer-sampling in West Malling, Kent, where we were living, I persuaded a friend to hitch-hike with me to Jack's Hill transport café for breakfast. Having hitched many times between Edinburgh and London, I knew Jack's Hill – on the old A1 – very well. Both of us, game for anything, hit the A20 at about 11pm.

"We made it to the café before dawn, had a cheap fry-up, then set off on the return leg. We got a lift into central London without much trouble, and caught a bus out to Blackheath. The coal lorries from South Wales used to go slowly up the hill on their way down the A2, and often they would let you in at the traffic lights."

However, we did not get a single lift that day and had to walk every step of the way back to West Malling, late for work and very footsore. It was only then that we discovered what the rest of the country already knew,

that there had been a gaol break-out that morning and drivers had been warned not to give lifts to anyone hitching, not even two 18-year-olds, it seemed. I present this as the most sheerly irrelevant waste of time I ever indulged in during my eight years of hitching around Britain and Europe, and wonder if anyone can top it."

"Well done Changi airport, I say," writes Peter May of St Albans, after my story on free trips around the island. "Singapore airport has been offering tours to transit passengers for ages. I took one about seven years ago, when in transit from Borneo."

"Singapore is a hub for Asia, and those on cheap tickets often find themselves stuck for many hours in airports awaiting connections. Much better to get out and do something than wander the marble halls of duty-free consumerism."

Finally, while parts of the travel industry show signs of environmental awareness (see story on Budget Rent-a-Bike on page 15), *Travel Weekly* reports on the extravagant commuting habits of Lynn Narraway of Carnival Cruise Lines. When Hammersmith Bridge in west London was closed for repairs, she and her husband devised a way to beat the diversions. Each day Ms Narraway drives them both to the south side of the bridge and parks her car. They then walk across the bridge and transfer to his vehicle, which has been parked overnight on the north side. If they rented a couple of Budget bikes, they could even cut out that tiresome walk.

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A quick pas de deux to Paris

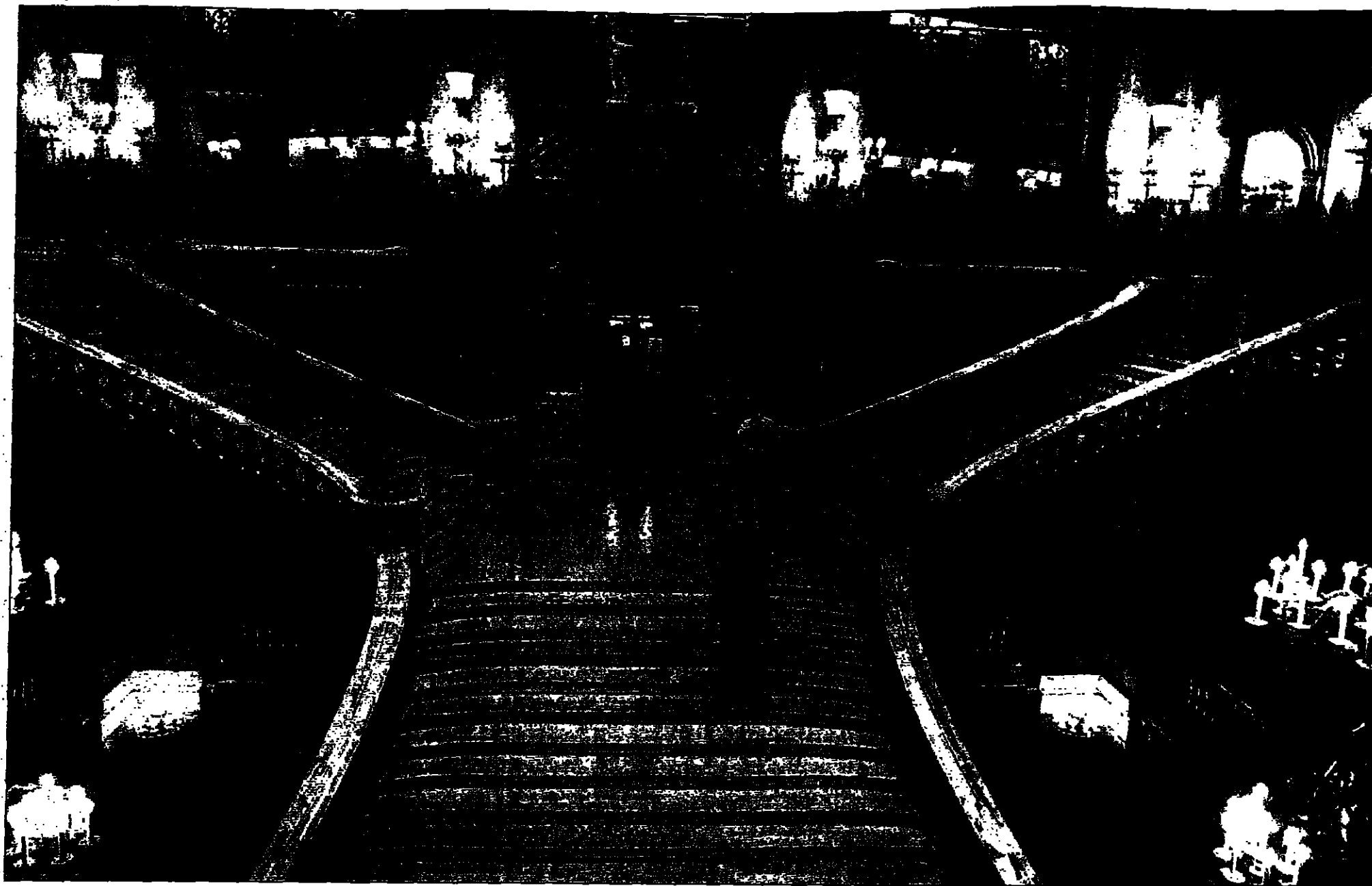
Ballet fans in mourning for Monday's closure of the Royal Opera House should hotfoot it to Paris, says John Percival, and not just because of Bastille Day

After more visits than I can remember, it still gives my heart a lift every time I walk up the Avenue de l'Opéra in Paris, because there at the top is the great Paris opera house, an exuberantly splendid Second Empire structure known, after its architect, as the Palais Garnier. Apart from its handsome appearance, this theatre thrills me with joyful memories and the anticipation of imminent further pleasure. And with Covent Garden closing, and Eurostar making Paris so easily accessible, it is high time for more people to find out for themselves how much grander, more elegant yet less snobbish the Garnier is than our Royal Opera House. Less expensive, too: the dearest seat for ballet there comes to between £28 and £40 depending on the programme, and the amphitheatre (where I sat on my first visits), with a high but unobstructed view, costs about £9 to £12.

Go through the portico and you are in a vast space with marble staircases, chandeliers, statues, huge pillars, painted ceilings – and all this grandeur before you, even set foot in the jewel-like auditorium with its ornately painted curtain and Chagall ceiling (at 220 square metres, one of the largest of modern paintings). You do not even have to attend a performance to view the public parts: the house is open for visits most days, from 10am until 4.30pm. This includes a museum and exhibitions held in the halls and promenades: until September, the subject is the classical ballerina's dress, the tutu, with photographs and many historic costumes.

But it would be crazy only to look round, and to deprive yourself of going to watch one of the world's greatest ballet companies, wonderful dancers performing an unusually varied repertoire. One of many highlights for me this season was the sight of Elisabeth Fritzi and Charles Jude together in Balanchine's 'Rhapsody' ballet. *Serenade*: a dream couple, perfectly matched in beauty of face, physique and movement. If you are feeling jealous (and there were many other treats earlier this season that it would be too cruel to mention), there is still John Neumeier's new production to Delibes' *Sylvia* (one of the greatest 19th-century ballet scores) to come at the end of this month.

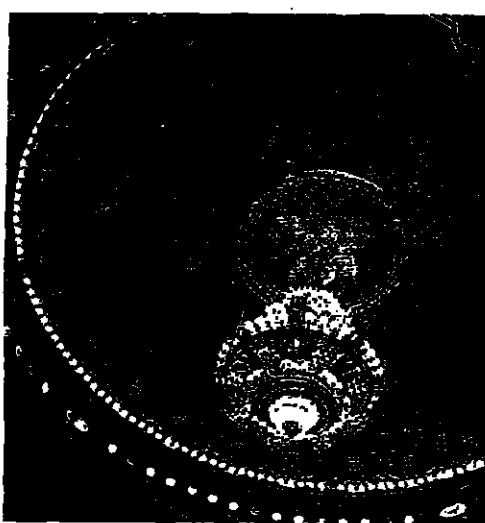
It doesn't matter too much which cast you catch; the rest of the principals and soloists, and the new youngsters besides, are all worth seeing. In this company, promotion goes partly by merit over the year, but partly (under a system devised by the



great 19th-century ballerina Marie Taglioni) by open competition, dancing two solos in front of a jury, so every dancer has the incentive of trying to shoot quickly to the top.

This is the oldest company in the world, founded by Louis XIV in 1661, but it claims also to be one of the youngest in terms of the average age (25) of its present 148 dancers. They give more than 150 performances a year in Paris, and tour. Next season, between October 1997 and July 1998, they will present 12 different programmes (plus a gala honouring their former star, Yvette Chauviré). These include four of the big classics in productions by their former director Rudolf Nureyev, a revival of *Giselle* restoring the historic 1924 designs by Alexander Benois, and, at the other extreme, creations by four contemporary French choreographers.

Especially interesting should be an evening in November by French composers: *Soir de Fête* to music by Delibes (its 1925 choreography by Leo Staats was much admired by Balanchine), Bizet's *L'Arlesienne* in Roland Petit's staging, and Leonide Massine's production of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Most of these performances are in the Palais Garnier, but three of the biggest shows will be at the larger new Bastille opera house, which is mainly devoted to the opera company. In



exchange, four of the smaller operas will be given at Palais Garnier. There is also always at least one visiting dance company at Garnier: next January Merce Cunningham from New York will bring two weeks of premieres. Incidentally, Paris's prodigal daughter, Sylvie Guillem, is due to return as guest star for two

performances each of Nureyev's *Don Quixote* and *Romeo and Juliet* and Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon* next summer. Expect to have to fight for tickets if you reckon that travelling to see her there would be more fun than the journey to Hammersmith or the Festival Hall for her London appearances.

Good food being another of the pleasures of Paris, you may like to know that there is no problem about eating after the show if you want to make a night of it. A late-serving and reliable old-fashioned bistro close by the Palais Garnier is Au Petit Riche (25 rue Le Peletier), and there are two good brasseries in the nearby rue Vivienne, Le Vaudeville and Le Grand Colbert. From the Opéra Bastille go for Brasserie Bofinger (5 rue Bastille). Right opposite the Eurostar terminal, the brasserie Terminus Nord is famous, and reliable for the first or last lunch of a trip, or you could try Chez Michel, only five minutes' walk away at 10 rue de Beaubourg, which has Breton specialities.

Tickets for ballet (and opera) at Palais Garnier or Opéra Bastille can be bought by post, in person, or (with a Fr10 surcharge per ticket) by telephone. Payment by Visa, Amex, Eurocheque (or at the theatre on arrival). Full details of programmes and how to book are in the Season Guide, available from Opéra National de Paris,

Accessible elegance: you don't have to attend a performance at the Paris opera house to revel in its public parts – the sumptuous staircase (above) and the Chagall ceiling (left)

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALISTAIR MILLER

Accueil, 120 rue de Lyon, 75012 Paris (fax: 00 33 1 44 73 13 74). Information also on Internet <http://www.opera-de-paris.fr>.

Three good-value ways to reach Paris without using British Airways (all prices are return, and include taxes): Eurostar (0345 303030) from London Waterloo, £69. Thomson City Savers (0171-200 8809): three nights in a budget-grade hotel, flying from Birmingham on Jersey European, £149. Air France (0181-742 6600): return flight from Edinburgh, £139.60.

Three good-value ways to reach Paris using British Airways (0345 222111): From London Heathrow, £74. From Plymouth, £94. From Manchester, £100. All these fares are subject to weekend surcharges, must be booked by 23 July and require advance booking and a Saturday night stay.

Bargain of the week

If you fancy heading out of London tomorrow, consider a day out in Blackpool. For Sooty's 50th anniversary, Virgin is putting on a special Sooty Express (0891 600 2222) from London Euston to Blackpool, Sooty's home town. The day return costs £31 – £9 less than the usual return ticket price – but to qualify you must be accompanying a teddy bear-carrying child, for whom the journey is free. The final destination, once in Blackpool, is The World's Biggest Teddy Bears' Picnic at Blackpool Zoo. Transport to the zoo is included in the train ticket, but the entertainment costs an additional £1. To ensure your seat on the train, book today.



something to declare

True or false?

If you have checked in luggage, you can dawdle as long as you like in the duty-free shop because the aircraft will have to wait for you.

False. International aviation rules insist that travellers must accompany their luggage, and aircraft captains are not permitted to depart until all passengers with checked-in bags are on board. But computerised baggage

systems are becoming more sophisticated, making it easier for airlines to off-load the luggage of tardy passengers. This summer, the Dubai-based carrier Emirates has instituted a rule saying that all passengers must be at the boarding gate at least 10 minutes before departure. Arrive any later, and staff will use the Baggage Reconciliation System to remove your luggage from the aircraft hold.

Trouble spots

Bureaucratic tangles: advice to summer holiday-makers from Thomson Holidays

Israel and Cyprus: We recommend that when visiting either Israel or Turkish Cyprus you ask the immigration authorities to stamp a separate piece of paper, rather than the passport itself. Should you already have an Israeli passport stamp and wish to visit an Arab country, or a Turkish Cypriot stamp and wish to visit Greece or Greek Cyprus, you may need to get a new passport.

Italy: In most countries the "old-style" green

driving licence is still valid. However, if you plan to visit Italy you should exchange it for a "new-style" pink licence if time allows – or obtain an International Driving Permit.

Mexico: If you are travelling to Mexico with your child, and your child's name is different from your own (ie, if you are remarried or unmarried), you must contact the Mexican consulate (0171-235 6393) to obtain and carry special documentation.

Turkey: An entry visa charge of £10 per person is payable in sterling on arrival.

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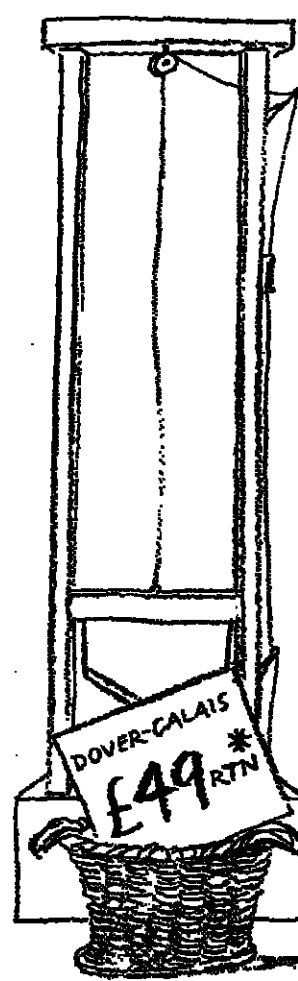
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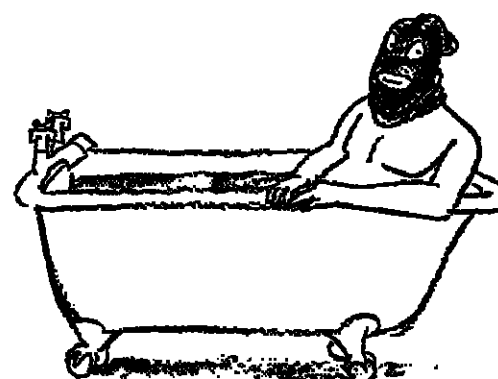
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Terraces are like icebergs; what's underneath is more important than what's on top. Anna Pavord on the quest for a perfect patio



DANNY BURGESS

"The patio" is a term used by estate agents to describe any collection of paving stones that is loosely attached to a house. Builders like patios because they give an illusion of order to a new house. They push all the muck they should never be leaving behind into a raft around the back door and then drop concrete slabs on top of it as they retreat backwards off the site - usually for ever.

Gradually the forces of gravity try to make sense of the plastic sacks, copies of *The Sun*, solidified cement powder, off-cuts of rafters and fossilised sandwiches. The patio begins to heave like the sea in the Bay of Biscay.

This is the point at which the novice gardener usually moves in, fired with enthusiasm by articles on making the garden an extension of the living-room. There are visions of candlelit supper tables, parasols and loungers. The reality is stubbed toes, and chairs that never sit with four legs on the ground.

Patios are like icebergs. What is underneath is more important than what is on top. There is little you can do to disguise an erupting patio. However much you may try to persuade yourself otherwise, the only true solution is to lift off the top layer and sort out the substratum.

If you call in someone else to build or rebuild your sitting-out place, make clear specifications on a few key points. The foundation should be made of 100mm of hardcore, topped up with sand and shingle to give a smooth bed for the final layer of paving stones, bricks or whatever material you decide on. The finished level of the patio must be at least 150mm below the damp course. If this is impossible, plan for a gap of 75mm between terrace and house wall and fill it with hardcore topped with pebbles or gravel.

Drainage is another nightmare. Any water that collects on the patio must be persuaded to spill over the garden edge

and not in through the kitchen door. House drains and air bricks must also be treated with caution, and not immured carelessly behind half a ton of concrete.

The texture of the finished terrace will have an important effect on the pleasure you get from the garden as a whole. Concrete is cheap but, unless used carefully, looks it. Colouring the concrete compounds, rather than alleviating the deficiencies of the material. A chequerboard of pink, grey and green slabs may seem an interesting idea on paper, but it is an uncompromising pattern to live with. Better to let the colour come from the plants and containers. These can change

from season to season and will be shown off far better in a plain setting than against a psychedelic array of chemical dyes.

I would go for a neutral colour, but choose paving slabs with some surface texture. Manufacturers call them "river" slabs. Although they do not weather like stone, they are far more pleasing to the eye than the flat, matt surfaces of the standard concrete slab.

Whatever material you use for paving a terrace, it should fit in with the other materials around it. Brick makes a satisfactory surface, not only because it is full of texture, but because it can be laid in so many different patterns. You could

do a whole terrace in basket-weave or herringbone, or divide the space into squares with straight double lines of brick, infilling the spaces with bricks laid in a different pattern. They must be frost-proof. As a rough estimate, you will need 48 bricks of the old size for each square yard, if you lay them on edge (the best way), 32 if you lay them flat.

Timber decking has never caught on here in the same way as it has in the States where it is often used as a transition between house and garden. I have not tried it in my own garden, but the possibilities are intriguing. Wood is not as durable as concrete or brick, but it has a

warm, pleasant texture and is more malleable than either of the others.

It is a good way of creating a flat space on sloping ground without all the expense of levelling or building up which a concrete terrace would demand on such a site. The deck can sit on a timber underpinning and the supports can easily be clothed with climbers which will then poke their noses in at the level of the decking. Wood gets slippery in wet weather, but there are anti-slipper products available.

The amount of space that a patio takes up should bear some reasonable relationship to the size and shape of the

garden as a whole. It is more common to make them too small than too big. You cannot relax in a space if you have to jump out of your chair every time someone else wants to get by.

We've just made a new sitting-out space, facing west, where the sun lasts longest in the evening. It's a little bit away from the house so there were no problems about drainage or damp courses. It is 18ft long by 12ft wide, with walls on two sides, a fence on the other and lawn in front. The stone walls dictated the proportions, but a ratio of three to two, length to breadth, often feels the most comfortable. Levelling the area was the biggest job, carting in soil from other parts of the garden, then raking it over and waiting for the verdict of the spirit level, which seemed viciously intent on prolonging the heavy labour.

We left the area to settle, killed the weeds, and then covered it with beach pebbles, which are rounded rather than sharp. Contractors would probably have recommended a layer of Terram or some similar plastic mesh material under the pebbles. This would have stopped the pebbles disappearing gradually into the earth, and would also have prevented weeds growing through. But I hate that kind of sterility. For the sake of self-seeding poppies and columbines, I'm happy to pull a few weeds now and again.

To edge the area that butted on to the lawn and make a barrier between pebbles and grass, we used old slate slips, the kind that used to be set round fireplaces. They are 3ft 6in long, 5in wide and about an-inch-and-a-half thick. We picked them up at a local salvage yard for £3 each. Another slab of slate (5ft x 2ft), from a dairy that was being demolished, makes a table, set on top of an old mangle. A slab 5ft by 3ft would have been better, but you can't be choosy when you haunt demolition sites. The bodger's bench I wrote about last week in *Cuttings* completes the scene. Now I can't think how we ever did without it.

Cement garden

Pat Roberts writes from Tring, Hertfordshire, with a problem about morning glory (*Ipomoea tricolor*): "The ones I have planted this year germinated beautifully, but subsequently only made thin, straggly growth. I have them all in sunny positions - some against a hot, dry wall facing due south. Others are in a border growing up a willow wigwam together with purple-podded peas (for eating). They are also in full sun. The ones in the border are doing very slightly better than the ones against the wall but, even so, I fear my original fantasy of the two intertwined will not be realised as the peas will have been devoured before the morning glories flower. But I love the flowers and would like to be able to succeed."

The problem with morning



CUTTINGS

glories is not getting them to germinate, but persuading them to hang on to life once they have done so. The usual advice is to soak the seed before you sow it. I don't usually bother and find that, sown one to a 3in pot, they come up pretty easily.

But, being natives of subtropical regions of central America, they hate cold and draughts. Hardening them off gently and gradually is the key, before introducing them

to their planting positions outside. This is easier to do if you don't sow too early. Once they start to grow, they grow quickly. You can grow them permanently in pots, but you will need to move them on from the 3in pots to ones twice the size.

Being subtropical by nature, morning glories like it wet as well as hot. This, I suspect, is why Mrs Roberts' plants are doing slightly better on the wigwam than they are on the wall. The footings of walls are notoriously dry places.

Any dramatic drop in temperature, any chill wind, will make the foliage go white and then growth stops completely. This year has not been an ideal one for heat-lovers such as morning glory. That's what I'm telling myself, anyway, because mine have failed too.

WEEKEND WORK

Cut out flower stems from mock orange (*Philadelphus*) leaving the new shoots to flower next season. Weigela needs the same treatment. Gather herbs such as rosemary and thyme and hang them in bundles to dry in a cool, airy place.

Transplant leeks from seed bed to vegetable plot. With a dibber, make holes at least 9in deep and drop a leek into each hole. Water them in well. You do not need to fill in the holes with earth.

Mulch runner beans when the P20 is damp, to conserve moisture. Thin kohlrabi plants so that they are not more than 6in apart. Thin young beetroot. The thinnings are delicious steamed whole with butter and a scatter of shredded orange peel.

Sow more radish and lettuce to keep the supply going through the summer. The wonderfully damp conditions at present mean that summer-sown seed will germinate fast. Transplant purple sprouting broccoli plants, making a deep hole with a trowel and setting the young plants deeper in the ground than they have been growing in the seed bed. Water them liberally into the holes and then firm down the earth hard around them.

Keep dead-heading violas to encourage them to produce new flowers. Leggy clumps can be shorn down close to the ground to encourage bushy new growth.

Keep an eye on strawberry runners, which quickly play havoc with a neatly laid out strawberry bed. On each plant, leave the two strongest and nip out the rest. Pick whitecurrants and redcurrants regularly.

Take cuttings of the climbing hydrangea, *H. petiolaris*. Use vigorous young side shoots about 3in long and stick them into pots of peat and sand mixture. Firm the soil down well around them.

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Vice and verse

Richard D North, gets caught in the crossfire of poetry and petunias in Ledbury



Outburst of shouting petals: Ledbury is awash with hanging baskets as well as poets

It's nine o'clock these nights before the sun leaves off warming the faces of the houses of Ledbury, nestling as it does on the west side of a range of hills which becomes the Malverns. The town is at the eastern edge of Herefordshire, and this is the polite side of the Marches, which lean their shoulders westward to hold the lachrymose Welsh at some distance from the unfeeling English.

I look across at the town most nights when I'm in the county. I see the wooded hills, but can't make out the town hall in which hangs the certificate that proves that a local prep school master, WH Auden, made a marriage of convenience (hers, not his). At the town's fringes there is a sprawl of quite pretty, but rather despoiled, new housing which has enticed a Tesco to join the longer-serving Sainsbury's.

Down the road at Dymock, Robert Frost persuaded the literary journeyman, Edward Thomas, to write the poems which have attracted people, without much startling them, ever since. They're not of the first rank, any more than are most of the works of the small folio of poets who visited each other in that

place at that time. But they have moved people, and have attracted a small industry of visitors and walkers. Last week there was a fine old row when it was found that one of the paths trod reverently for its literary associations had been planted over by its farmer-owner.

Perhaps inspired by the worldliness of the monks who taught him at Malvern, William Langland wrote *Piers Plowman*, his satire on the ways of the world and the church, notionally based on a dream begun in a field at Colwall, just up the road from Ledbury. A local ploughman writes self-deprecating doggerel there now, and started in a warm-up for the festival after judging the town's famous ploughing match last autumn.

If longevity is anything to go by, Langland's poem is by far the most important thing to come out of the region. The nearest modern equivalent is the work of John Masefield, after whom was named the comprehensive whose pupils are a big part of this week's festival.

Masefield did write about his childhood Ledbury. His *Wonderings* and *The Land Workers* are not a bit what you might expect from the country's leading maritime romancer. Long and grand, they speak of Ledbury's drunken-

ness, poverty and bigotry, and of human nastiness on a scale that makes you proud to be alive in our own milk-livered times, a bit over a century later. He celebrates a rustic town in which great things happened; he especially loved the horses towing logs through the streets. And he doesn't pretend to have suffered himself; he merely notes that even in so small a town, there was a quarter of unimaginable bleakness.

There remains some nastiness, though incest is famously more of a feature farther north in the county. The young of the town still hang about more or less as menacingly as Masefield describes, and in the picturesque cobbled lane he writes about, windows get broken by yobs much as they always did.

Oddly, the young leave the hanging baskets alone, even those which adorn the market hall, in whose lee a great street party will be held tonight. Why they should fail to target these hideously ebullient blooms, I can't say. I am tempted to down a few myself. Ledbury is only the worst of the towns round here for this sort of thing. The garages of Hereford are awash with them. You can't get into a pub without fighting past them. But in Ledbury's high street, there is a very special outburst of shout-

ing petals. They are offensively cheery, appallingly gay, violent in their perkiness.

This year, with any luck, Ledbury will win the region's round of the Britain in Bloom competition, instead of running-up as it did last time. The judging is set to coincide with this weekend's grand finale of the poetry festival, and only total success will allow the town to relax into something like subfusc for following summers. God knows what excesses failure might induce.

By the time you read this, the festival will have spread popular poetry all across the town. The organisers, by the way, have set their faces against the high-falutin', at least in the inaugural year. But there is just time to enter today's poetry reading competition, a minute precursor of which, in a local pub, was really the precursor to the present convulsions. And tomorrow, you can argue the toss with five well-known poets, including Danny Abse, as they defend their favourite poem in a balloon debate. And those are just the bits of the weekend I'm chafing...

The first annual Ledbury Poetry Festival runs until Sunday. Call 01531 634156 for details

With groans of relief our neighbours yesterday returned to their normal midsummer tasks of making hay and silage. Yet all went back to work lit up by the success of the Countryside Rally, held in Hyde Park on Thursday.

It is too early to gauge the political effect of this mass protest against the latest attempt to ban hunting with hounds; but nobody who took part will ever forget the day the country went to town - or the sight of 100,000 people in bright shirts and dresses flooding the plain around the Reformer's Tree, or the waves of sound that rocked the plane trees as 100,000 voices swung into "Dye Ken John Peel?" and "Jerusalem".

The size of the crowd far exceeded the expectations of the organisers, the British Field Sports Society, who had hoped for 25,000. The fact that four times as many people turned out was largely due to the success of independent countryside marches.

This grass-roots idea was conceived at least a year before the Labour party came to power, by Mark Miller Mundy, a photographer, and Chippie Mann, a farmer's wife, both from Gloucestershire. Neither is, or has ever been, a hunting person. Indeed, Mrs Mann declares herself "far too frightened ever to climb on to a horse". Nevertheless, both felt that the time had come for country people to stand up for their rights.

The plan was for marches starting from Scotland, the Lake District, Wales and Cornwall to converge on London. Small numbers of core marchers would go all the way; hundreds more would join them on daily slogs of about 20 miles.

Mrs Mann and her husband Charles turned one of their farm buildings into an office. Volunteers manned telephones, fax machines and photocopyers. As news of the plan spread, hundreds more



Duff Hart-Davis

offered to house and feed the walkers as they came past. So, from a kitchen table-top, and on a tiny budget, the idea spread throughout the land. Marchers were told that, whatever provocation they might meet, they must conduct themselves "in a dignified and orderly way". At Calbeck, in the Lake District, 400 people turned out. At Tavistock, in Devon, 700 well-wishers saw the West Country marchers off; at Stow-on-the-Wold 2,000

people crammed the square to salute walkers from Wales.

As the marchers drew closer to London, their courage and dedication attracted much favourable publicity - with

the anti-conspicuous by their absence. The one place they showed in any strength was near Woodstock, where about 20 of them appeared, dressed in black from head to foot, to scream their ritual obscenities. The man who wound down his car window to speak to them was Mark Miller Mundy; when he said, "Sorry, boys, you're last year's flavour", they were temporarily struck dumb.

The BFSS naturally had many worries. One was that the anti-would call false bomb scares on the Tube to disrupt the rally. Another was that the police might ban umbrellas, as potentially offensive weapons.

Yet on that glorious day all was sweetness and light. Marches and rally showed beyond reasonable argument that country folk are not the bloodthirsty monsters the anti-claim: the qualities most in evidence were good humour, guts and compassion.

Nobody will ever forget the day the country came to town

THE INDEPENDENT

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all consuming

Flamboyant? Paul Smith?

That's the only word to describe his latest, Jaggeresque collection. By Andy Zneimer



Fluid and flowing: the 'Aristocrat Delux' collection by Paul Smith (above centre) makes a bold move away from global fashion 'blandness'. The new look includes upholstered fabric suits (above) from £1,425; devoree velvet suits (top right) from £890; linen suits (middle right) from £639; and wool suits (bottom right) from £689

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRIS MOORE

Paul Smith's new main-line collection for spring/summer 1998 is both daring and dynamic. 'Aristocrat Delux' represents a clear departure from his previous style and reflects Mr Smith's determination to counter what he sees as an endemic slide into 'blandness' in fashion.

As we sit and chat in his Covent Garden shop's loft-cum-office, it quickly becomes apparent that Paul Smith, this hugely successful and self-effacing bastion of British design, has a real bee in his bonnet: 'Giorgio Armani proclaimed that fashion was dead last year. Joseph Ettedgui [the patron of the Joseph shops] was quoted in an article in *Harpers & Queen* saying how fashion companies are 'building into global brands, like Coca-Cola, leaving little room for creativity'. Well, I'm saying, yes, they're right, but what are we going to do about it? It's our job to change it. Why can't large corporations make clothes that have individuality? It's not all about the bottom line, profit, shareholders. My new collection is virtually all hand-made and, for me, the style is eccentric and flamboyant. We've got to stay one step ahead or we're in danger of losing the plot. Not everyone will have liked my show in Paris last week but I don't care. It's the point I'm making that counts.

No matter where one is in the world, be it Milan, Paris, New York or London, the trend towards globalisation in fashion has never been greater. Paul Smith himself exports to 40 countries yet recognises the need to remain at the creative cutting edge.

Indeed, designers face both economic and creative pressure to satisfy the demands of diverse export markets and customer profiles. They are bound in part by factory production processes and economies of scale. It is those challenges that Paul Smith feels must be met and overcome if fashion is to remain dynamic and vibrant.

'The past few years have been



very classical and minimalist,' he continues enthusiastically. 'I want to nudge my customers gently. There is an element of risk but I want to break the rules. The new collection uses many more 'liquid' fabrics with what we call more drape.

'The trend has been for more shiny, stiff materials. Very sharp - Kray twins. This collection is much more fluid and flowing with a matt, dry effect.

'The suit silhouette is no longer Paul Weller, slim-fit; that retro-Gucci, flat-front trouser look. It's more baggy. The key is that every item is hand-stitched, making the garments look distinctly different. There are real silk linings, hand-stitched inside with coloured piping all around. Pink this side, blue that side. No one garment is the same as the next. We've created a bespoke feel to what are ready-to-wear garments. I've added a special line in the factory where every item is hand-worked. The shirts are totally hand-stitched with mother-of-pearl buttons. It just shows that there is room for individuality in fashion.'

When I ask what are the cultural reference points that inspired 'Aristocrat Delux', Paul Smith refers to Mick Jagger's sumptuous attire in the seminal Sixties film, *Performance*. The collection has that eccentric, over-the-top, vaguely feminine

edge to it with its flamboyant devoree velvet suits and dressing gowns, hand-embroidered, flower-patterned shirts and decadent bright velvet shoes. 'Visually it's kind of where Peter O'Toole and Brian Epstein meet Jean Cocteau and Cecil Beaton,' he explains. 'It has that confident, rather snobbish, straight-backed feel to it. We used fresh-faced, genuine young aristocrats to model the collection and asked them to 'posture' more than usual. There was more hair around than we have seen recently. I wanted to move away from that clean-cut look.'

Today, Paul Smith has seven shops in London, one in New York, one in Paris, five in Hong Kong, one in Singapore, Bangkok, Taipei and Korea, the original shop in Nottingham, a new outlet in Manchester and 162 shops in Japan. Paul Smith Limited licenses a Japanese trading house, Itochu, to manufacture, wholesale and retail the Paul Smith collection. The shops are replicas of the shops in England, entire wooden interiors having been shipped out. The staff undergo the same training and Paul Smith himself remains immersed in the operation, designing the clothes, choosing the fabrics, approving the shop locations and overseeing all key developments.

He is the chairman and principal designer, an almost unique position in the industry, allowing him to retain a personal touch often missing in similar sized operations. The annual turnover of the wholesale, retail and licensed business is £142m. This is a 'global' company with a creative outlook.

'Some critics will have missed the point,' he sighs. 'In a way, the clothes are secondary. A lot of designers have been talking about change and the need for it. But they haven't worked out how to do it. This collection is more extreme than anything I've done for a long while. I want to nudge people to think about change and individuality. I've just become so bored. People should be a lot braver. At least I'm having a go.'



Retail theatre makes a stylish comeback

Forget wind-swept shopping parks and drab supermarkets. The department store, with all its glitz and glamour, is enjoying a renaissance in fortune. By Debbie Davies

Conspicuous consumption reached new heights when shopping met Hollywood glamour and Daryl Hannah arrived on a black horse to open Harrods' summer sale, sampling jewellery that, even after a 50 per cent reduction, was still priced at £330,000. The sale, which started on Wednesday, is expected to attract 200,000 shoppers to spend about £14m.

Harrods' glitzy performance underlines the renaissance in the fortunes of department stores, many of which suffered a shaky Eighties.

There was a time when they were unassailable for luxury and exclusivity. And they have always had that sense of glamour so happily added to by Ms Hannah, star of *Roseanne* and *Splash*. Indeed, department stores have a pedigree when it comes to this sort of retail theatre. Back in 1919, Galeries Lafayette, the Harvey Nichols of Paris, offered 25,000 francs to the first pilot who managed to land on the roof of the store. Jules Vendrines, the distinguished First World War flier, obliged, and the resulting media coverage was sufficient to persuade department stores of the benefits of publicity.

Department stores can trace their roots back to the theatrical world of Paris in the mid-1850s when stores such as Le Bon Marché, Printemps and Galeries Lafayette opened their doors to an Art Nouveau-inspired world of stained glass domes, sweeping staircases, grand atria and gilded ironwork. Architecturally they had more in common with the Paris Opéra than their predecessors, the street

markets, and their style was copied around the world. From GUM, the state department store in Moscow, to Carson Pirie Scott in Chicago, department stores came to look more like civic, even royal, buildings than shops.

In their grand setting, Parisian department stores were the first to offer goods clearly marked with fixed prices. Exchanging and refunding money on returned goods were other department store firsts, as were January sales, and clothes copied from those worn by the most fashionable and made available 48 hours later.

This historical baggage was until recently bad news. City analysts had for years written off department stores, which they regarded as 'retail dinosaurs' weighed down by their architecture. But then Corporate Intelligence, the retail analyst, reported the sector achieving 10 per cent growth in sales last year, making it the fastest growing sector in retailing.

If the department store is dead, why was Harvey Nichols forced by sheer numbers of customers repeatedly to close the doors at its new 45,000 sq ft Leeds store; and why are property developers chasing department stores as essential 'anchors' for their new shopping centres?

Corporate Intelligence cites the huge sums poured into refurbishing buildings that had fallen into disrepair, as fundamental to the sector's re-emergence. Selfridges, for example, has spent £65m remodelling its store in Oxford Street, London, an investment that Corporate Intelligence says lies behind an improving financial performance.

David Elliott, Selfridges' retail director, agrees that department stores work best when they provide entertainment.

'The emotion generated in research focus groups about department stores is tremendous,' he says. It is the scale as well as the style of a store such as Selfridges that allows it to stage under one roof grottoes, radio broadcasts, fashion shows and food demonstrations. Mr Elliott says that the mix of activities creates a type of shopping far removed from the way we shop for commodities such as food.

Galeries Lafayette, always a delightful place to shop, works on the same principle. The store knows from its research that the buying habits of its customers are influenced more by attitude and behaviour than by conventional socio-economic factors such as age and income. Of course, that explains why a teenager with the least amount of disposable income shows greatest loyalty to premium brands, while a millionaire may choose to watch cricket through the railings rather than pay the entrance charge. What we spend has more to do with mood and attitude than with our bank balance; and department stores are all about putting us in the mood.

The sector, according to Corporate Intelligence, has proved peculiarly adaptable over the past 150 years. Tremendous changes have occurred in retailing since department stores were invented. Nowadays there are shopping centres, discount retailing and, most significantly, out-of-town retail parks, with the scale, product mix and economics to threaten



Galeries Lafayette: success can be attributed to its elegance and detailed market research ALISTAIR MILLER

stores. Yet they have turned to their advantage the very lack of overheads that come with out-of-town sheds. Toys R Us and the like put up their Meccano frame buildings almost overnight, in the style of the market stall holder. By comparison, department stores continue to plough millions into buildings created a century or more ago by craftsmen and architects such as Majorelle, Sullivan and Tiffany.

Undoubtedly, car parking and breadth of product mix have won big market share for out-of-town retailers, but few would deny that their sheds lack soul. Is there an out-of-town retailer like Bentalis, of Kingston-on-Thames, a family-run department store which has staff of 25, 40, even 50 years'

service, and a family member as chairman of its club for retired employees?

Corporate Intelligence estimates department stores accounted for 3.8 per cent of retail sales in the UK last year and look set to outperform the general retail market again in 1997. And they stand to benefit further from rising numbers of older customers, traditionally the most loyal department store shoppers. As Steve Davies, author of the Corporate Intelligence report, says, 'Having gambled and invested heavily in their stores in the Eighties and early Nineties, when the future of department stores looked very shaky indeed, the major players are now in a position to reap the rewards of their foresight.'

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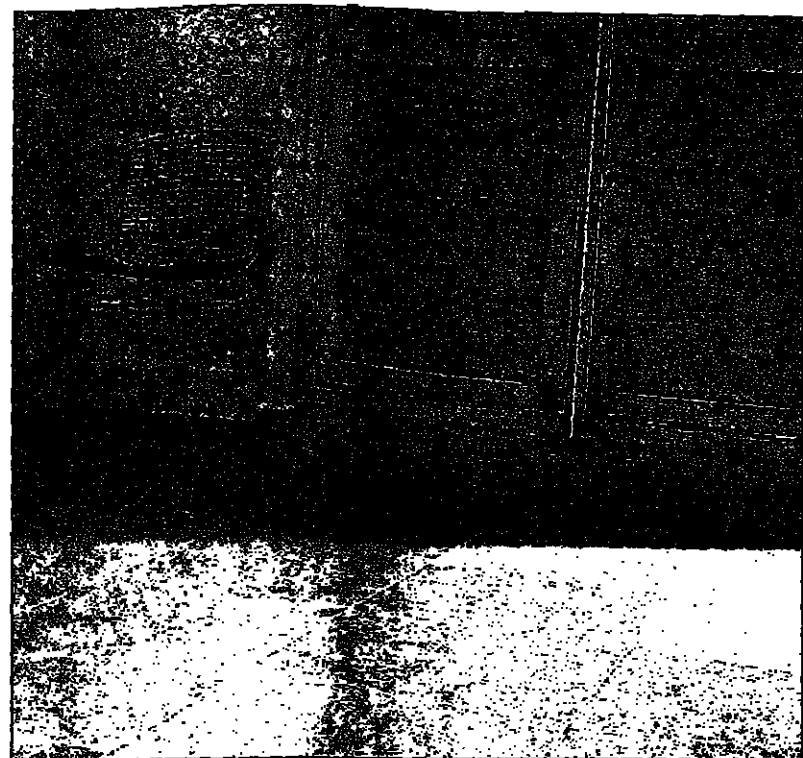
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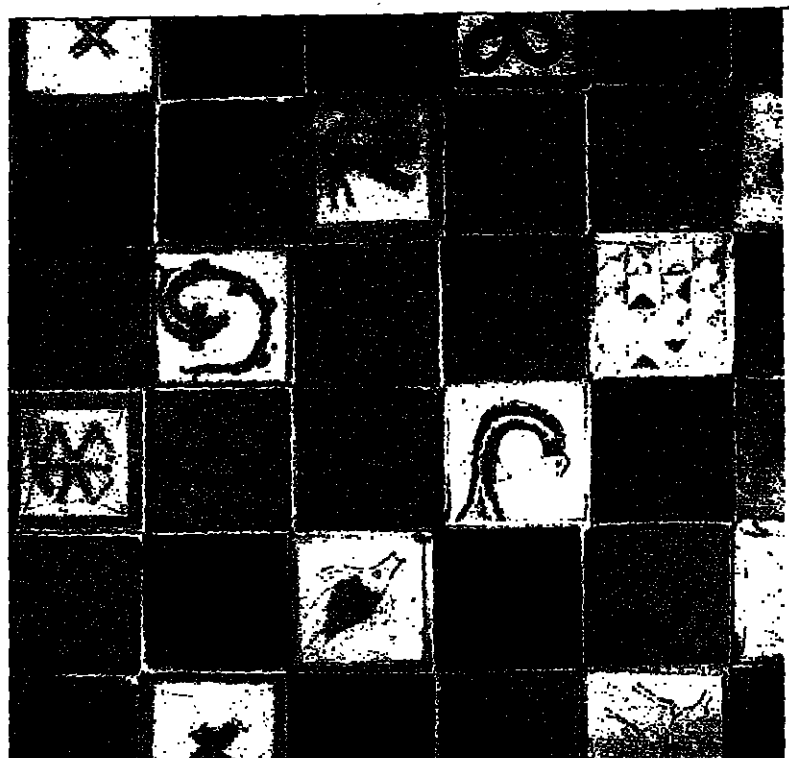
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homes & money



From ancient Jerusalem flagstones to Moorish mosaics... Rosalind Russell on the latest in couture flooring



Grounds for artistry

London-based flooring firms have been rummaging around in Jerusalem's redundant public buildings, courtyards and private houses to reclaim old flagstones. Polished by generations of soft-slipped feet, they've become the latest must-have floor tiles in the expensive interior-designed homes of England's green and pleasant land. Who wants lime when you can have history at your feet for £310 a square metre, plus VAT? Paris Ceramics is just one of the companies offering the Jerusalem Stone.

Attica, which sells in London through Selfridges' new Floor Coverings Library, calls its version Biblical Stone. This costs £260 a square metre, plus VAT. There are no restrictions on exporting the old stone as it doesn't come from protected areas and most is salvaged from demolition sites. It's all very Old Testament – and top-of-the-market house buyers love it. Designer floors can even tip the balance between choosing a new house over a period one, according to estate agents.

"High specification like attractive

wood or stone flooring, used by builders, means new homes are now as popular as period homes," says Richard Thomas of Knight Frank. "There has been a dramatic erosion of the social stigma attached to buying a new house. They are a good investment because they are easier to re-sell."

Paris Ceramics – owned and run by Charlie Smallbone, the founder of Smallbone Kitchens – will design and make a one-off floor for clients with their own ideas and unlimited cash. One recent commission was to replicate the ceramic floor in the Pope's Bedroom, a room in the medieval Palace of the Popes in Avignon in France. Ceramic artist Alex Zdan-kowicz recreated the floor, working from photographs, and installed it in eight weeks, start to finish.

Zdan-kowicz also developed the Moorish Mosaic, based on a Moroccan antique design, which is made to order at £450 a square metre. It's not even its most expensive. Basilica, based on 16th-century Italian roof tiles made for the Chapel of Bartolomeo Lombardini



in the church of San Francisco at Forlì (a section of which is in the V&A) is so complicated, Paris Ceramics declines to quote a price, except to the client.

There is, it has to be admitted, a certain amount of enviable swank in being able to point to your bathroom floor and admit it cost as much as a new Range Rover. One thirtysomething City broker spent more than £20,000

History at your feet: Attica's Biblical Stone (left) which comes from Jerusalem; Paris Ceramics' Papal Floor (above) and French Vix Blue Limestone (above left) – which they say dates from the Jurassic period

on a kitchen floor made of quartzite glittering with discreet flecks of trace elements and coloured mineral deposits, brought from India. It hardly made a dent in his annual bonus, but it impressed his new American in-laws.

Cher and Bob Geldof are fans of Attica, whose limestone flooring, quarried in the north of England, has genuine fossil impressions of animal skeletons and shells. It costs £160 per square metre, plus VAT. Not to be outdone, Paris Ceramics says a couple of its limestone floors – Cotswold stone and the French Vix Blue – date from the Jurassic period ... though Richard Attenborough's footprint has yet to be found in either.

Architects such as Brian Ma Sy list a wooden floor as a main architectural feature in a house. He installed a Junckers solid beech floor in his own loft apartment in a converted Victorian school. Junckers, whose clients have also included Richard Branson, Ruby

Wax and the Queen, was originally founded to produce sleepers for the Danish National Railway but is now one of the names – like Neff, Aga or Bosch – which estate agents like to drop in house particulars.

The company has just launched a new wide-board oak floor, like those in period houses. It's supplied unfinished to allow for choice of treatments, including oiling, waxing or liming. The floor is laid using the quick clip system, which means it can be laid over an existing floor – even tiles – as long as it's dry and even. The 8mm range in solid beech, oak or ash is no thicker than a normal carpet, so there will be minimum changes to doorway and skirting board. Prices start at under £38 per square metre.

For stockists of Junckers call 01576 517512; Paris Ceramics 0171 371 7778, or Harrogate: 01423 523877; Attica 0171 738 1234

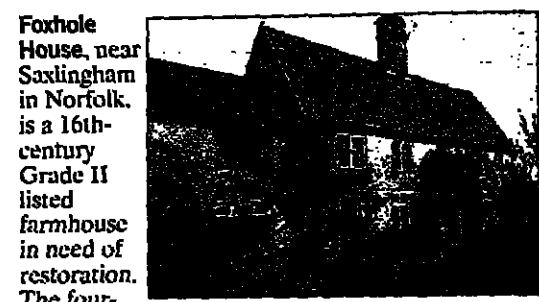
Three on view

Foxy properties

Compton Valence House, near Dorchester in Dorset, was lived in by Parson Milne, the famous hunting parson who was Master of Cottesloe Hounds from 1900 to 1931, long before the sport became contentious. The six-bedroom former rectory has four reception rooms, a kitchen with an Aga, and 111 acres to gallop about in. It is for sale at £750,000 through Michael de Pelet (01935 812236).



Foxhill House, near Bourton-on-the-Water in Gloucestershire, lies within the Heythrop hunt country, and it is also handy for the races at Cheltenham. The five-bedroom Cotswold stone house was built in 1925, with a few later additions, and has attractive, stone mullioned windows. The property comes with a self-contained flat above the garage – and three loose boxes. It is priced at £375,000, through Knight Frank (01865 790077).



Foxhole House, near Saxlingham in Norfolk, is a 16th-century Grade II listed farmhouse in need of restoration. The four-bedroom house, eight miles from Norwich, lies down a single-track road a mile and a half from the village. It has leaded windows, exposed beams and studs, but, say agents Strutt & Parker, needs extensive work. It has mains water and electricity and septic tank drainage, and comes with a third of an acre, two loose boxes and a tack room. £125,000 (01603 619945).

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Penny Jackson meets three home owners selling without agents

Penny Jackson

FAX: 0171 293 2505

Replies should be addressed to the relevant box number,
The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

Both were just skin and bone and one, Lizzie, was infested with lice, had worms and a deep wound was still oozing pus.

We saved them and tended Lizzie's wound with staff actually sleeping in the initial nights. After 9 months she was set up on her own for the northwile for her again.

I've been rescuing and donating but we need

throats of beagle puppies and they were forced the weedkiller, ethofumesate in a UK laboratory.

This weedkiller had already been tested on animals and has been on the market for twenty years.

Please help the National Anti-Vivisection Society stop animal experiments. We are calling for freedom of information and the right to oppose experiments before they take place. Help us today.

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☐ I enclose a donation to help the work of the National Anti-Vivisection Society

☐ £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £20 ☐ £50 ☐ £. Other

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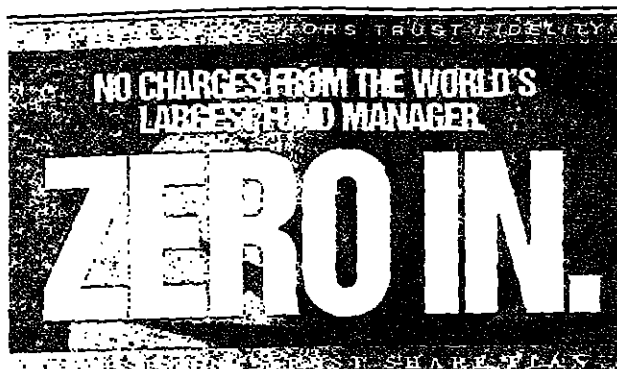
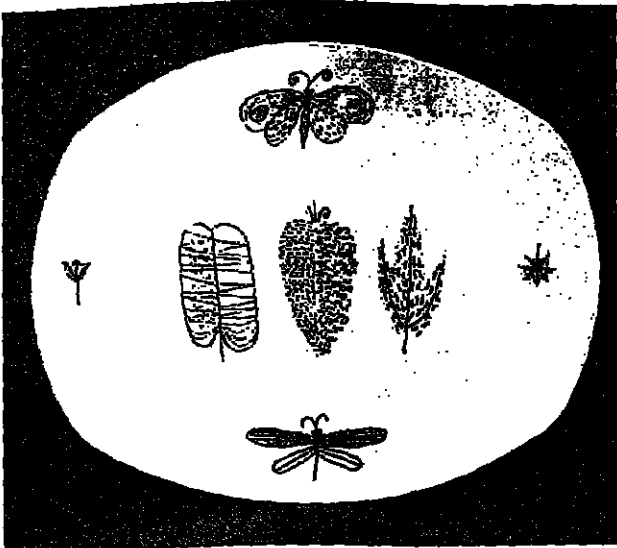
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Midwinter's day comes early

Collect to invest: John Windsor follows the fortunes of a dealer noted for spotting potential treasure years ahead of its time



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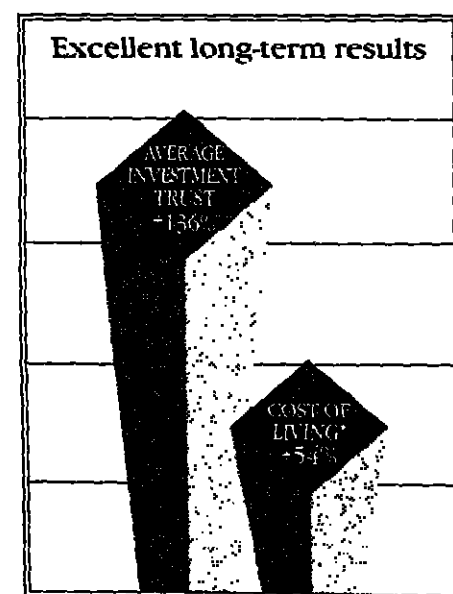
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Follow the leader: Richard Dennis with some of the treasures he has spotted, including (top left) a Midwinter plate - the latest craze he has inspired among collectors. The Midwinter exhibition is open until 7 August. PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN LAWRENCE



about a subject has nearly always meant that the market for it has improved. We give patterns and dates. Collectors like to relate to a book - it gives them confidence.

But the book must tell a good story: such as the story of the first studio pottery in Britain, founded by the Martin family. Their quirky but beautifully modelled salt-glaze stoneware birds, sold in Holborn, caricatured politicians and judges and were an in-joke.

"The family history reads like a Victorian novel. They earned only enough to subsist. They fired only two or three times a year and

sometimes lost the lot. One brother went mad because the shop burned down and the sister died after being bitten by a monkey."

The exhibition is open until 7 August. "Midwinter Pottery" by Steven Jenkins, £18 from bookshops or post-free with free publications catalogue from Richard Dennis Gallery, 144 Kensington Church Street, London W8 4BN (0171-727 2061, fax 0171-221 1383) or Richard Dennis Publications, The Old Chapel, Shepton Beauchamp, near Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0LE (01460-240044, fax 01460-242009).

AND IF YOUR MIND clings shut at the mere mention of the word million, consider this: If you add up your lifetime earnings - past and future - you will see that you will almost certainly earn a fortune in your lifetime. It could add up to a million pounds - or more.

The trouble is, like most people you'll earn it - and spend it. Of course, what you could be doing is taking this fortune and turning some of it into another fortune - the one you want to end up with.

But you'll probably say you've been too busy to attend to this yourself - or perhaps managing money today just seems too complicated.

Maybe you think you should entrust your money to an expert. If you do, you may be disappointed. The shocking truth is many professional fund managers are not much good at what they do. Most of them do more poorly than the Stockmarket as a whole. The only certainty about letting others manage your money is that you'll let them help themselves to a chunk of it through their fees.

IN FACT the widely-acclaimed Random Walk theory says that you will beat the pros at picking shares by simply blindfolding yourself and sticking a pin in the share table in your newspaper. Incredible, but true.

Look at unit trusts. The vast majority of them underperform the Stockmarket in general over time. They would have actually lost you money compared to buying shares at random!

So the question is: Why pay fat commissions and "management fees" to have a so-called professional manage your money?

What about seeking advice from a financial adviser - someone who'll give you sound and impartial advice on what best to do with your hard-earned money.

Well, you're going to have to look quite hard.

Firstly, most financial advisers aren't independent. They're not even allowed to call themselves that. That's because they're employed by the big financial fund managers to sell their products, and their products alone. They're really just salesmen.

So what about those who are allowed to call themselves independent financial advisers? Consider this fact: most IFAs earn their living from commission from the products they sell. Yet some of the best investments are run by firms which pay no commission. How likely do you think it is they'll be on your IFAs' shortlist of recommended investments if there's a commission-paying firm offering a remotely similar product?

But... let's face it... most people find today's world of personal finance too

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Douglas Moffitt, TV and Radio Financial Commentator

complicated - and too baffling. In short, they're stuck. They are successful in many other respects. But when it comes to investing and money management they have no real plan. All because there's been no simple way to get started. That is, until now...

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In simple language it outlines step-by-step how to build your own financial independence... and how to take the million or so you'll probably earn in your lifetime and get started on building the million you want to end up with - all without depending on some "expert" - and without paying for advice that may not be truly independent.

THE SPI COURSE starts with the basics and then goes on to the "tricks of the trade" - the simple, tried and true techniques that enable you to protect and then pyramid profits to build wealth even faster.

First - you'll quickly see how to "uncover" up to an extra £2,000 a year to invest - money you probably didn't even know you had.

Second - you'll be surprised at how easy it is to learn how to evaluate pension schemes - gilts - shares - Personal Equity Plans - Enterprise Investment Schemes - property investments - simple strategies that can slash your tax bill - in fact, all the important areas of investing and money management.

Third - and maybe most rewarding, you'll learn in detail about a number of really but simple "behind-the-scenes" techniques that you don't usually get to find out about at all. The kind that can often boost your returns 20, 30, even 50 per cent more - sometimes just in months - not years.

FOR EXAMPLE, a little technique called a "straddle", lets you bet that the Stockmarket will go up - and at the same time bet that it will go down - believe it or not, it is perfectly possible to make a profit whether it goes up or goes down!

Or how you can use your pension plan to turn £770 into £1000 overnight -

or more if you're a higher rate taxpayer. Of course there's a good deal more. But as you can see Successful Personal Investing is definitely not just some collection of "hot tips" or boring technical mumbo-jumbo.

Always everything is spelled out step-by-step, like a simple recipe. So you take just those steps that are right for your own circumstances.

BEAR IN MIND TOO, that the publisher of SPI, Independent Research Services Ltd., is not linked in any way to any vested interests. It is not connected with any Stockbroker or Insurance Agency or Unit Trust or the like - and it has no commissioned Salesmen or Agents. So you can be absolutely sure that what you learn will be for no one's benefit but yours.

Let's face it - most people spend more time planning a fortnight's holiday than learning how to manipulate their money. Surprisingly, SPI takes only a couple of hours of your time a month. There is no burning of the midnight oil.

True, money isn't everything. But it does help. SPI shows you how to start on the way towards having that million - and being able to tell yourself that you're a "millionaire". So, before your mind clings shut over that word again... why not at least take the opportunity to see for yourself? You can now get to look over the first two lessons with no obligation for 10 days just by posting the coupon below. And whatever you decide, Lesson 1 is yours to keep - FREE!

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IRS 12/7/97 12/97

Towards the end of last year, I wrote about the investment trust sector and how it seemed to be facing troubled times. I said consolidation looked inevitable, with the market suffering from oversupply and a worrying deterioration in the general level of discounts, where the price of shares in the trust is less than the value of its underlying assets. The warning proved timely, since there have been a number of disappointments since then.

With the exception of overseas specialist trusts, the discount gap has mostly failed to narrow, and in the case of general trusts, the gap between share price and net asset value is, at an average of 14 per cent, about as wide as it has been at any time in the past year. For new investors, this is still an interesting buying opportunity, but for those who are already shareholders, the deterioration in ratings over the past couple of years is a disappointment.

The strength of sterling has knocked the sector back and there have been other worries, including the various tax changes in the Budget. Apart from the ending of ACT tax credits, which will hit higher-yielding trusts but has been priced into the market, the main issue is what the promised review of capital gains tax might throw up.

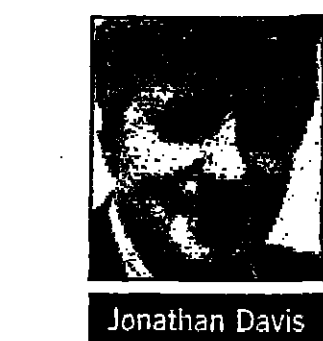
The great threat which has hung over the general diversified investment trusts is that many of the big investment institutions might want to dispose of

their big shareholdings. Whereas 20 years ago, it was common for life assurance companies and others to place a portion of their investment funds with general trusts for them to manage on their behalf, most now prefer to make their own decisions. If they give money to investment trust managers, it is mainly to those who run specialist sector or country funds which the institutions cannot so easily replicate themselves.

To date, they have been restrained by the large capital gains tax bills they stand to incur if they realise their holdings. But if the review of the taxation system promised by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, results in some form of tapered CGT system, designed to encourage longer-term investors, it could change the whole ball game. It is too early to guess how things might fall out in such circumstances, but it adds another interesting challenge to a sector already facing threatened competition on the retail front from a new breed, the open-ended investment company (OEIC).

A look at the sector fund flow statistics for the first half of the year shows that concerns about its health are not without foundation. While unit trusts have enjoyed a bumper year for sales, the same is not the case for investment trusts. During the first half of this year, there was a net outflow of funds from the sector for the first time since 1990.

Of the £980m of new money that came in, roughly half was in the form of debt



Jonathan Davis

Emerging markets may be the one bright spot in investment trusts, a sector that is still under-performing

How the investment trust sector compares

	Discount to asset value (%)	High	Low	Dividend yields (%)
All conventional trusts	11.5	12.0	8.4	1.70
FTSE 100 (index trusts)	11.4	11.8	7.7	1.79
Non-specialist	14.4	14.4	10.5	1.79
Smaller companies	13.3	13.2	8.1	1.82
Income growth	10.4	10.7	6.8	3.55
Capital growth				
North America	8.7	12.2	6.8	0.65
Rest of world	12.2	14.3	5.3	0.50
Japan	7.2	12.4	1.7	0.09
Europe	10.4	12.9	6.8	0.97
Emerging markets	9.9	12.1	6.6	0.39
Global	9.4	12.2	6.6	1.77
Worldwide	9.1	12.2	6.6	0.97

rather than equity. New issues brought in barely more than £200m – a far cry from the bumper year of 1994, when two investment trusts each raised £500m from the retail public. The biggest outflow of funds was the decision by the British Investment Trust to turn into a unit trust. Unitisation is one of the

routes by which investment trusts try to overcome the effect of a deteriorating discount.

As the table shows, the average level of discount on investment trusts is still 10-15 per cent. Although Japanese trusts have responded to the recovery in the Tokyo stock market this year (up 19 per cent in sterling terms), only North American trusts are trading anywhere near their lows for the year in terms of discount.

The worst problems are in the smaller companies section. As has been widely noted, virtually all the strength in the London stock market this year has come from the largest companies. The Footsie index, which broadly represents the performance of the largest 100 companies by market capitalisation, is up 28.5 per cent over the past year. But the FTSE 250 index, which measures the next tier of medium-sized and smaller companies, has risen only 1.5 per cent during the same period.

What we are seeing is a blue chip rally, and it is no surprise that the specialist smaller company trusts are taking a beating. Yet the strength of Footsie is not doing much good even for these general trusts which closely follow the main market indices. The Alliance Trust, for example, has grown in net asset value by 15 per cent over the past year, but is still languishing on a 16 per cent discount. Scottish Mortgage is selling on a discount of just under 14 per cent.

Of course some of the better quality, more specialist trusts are still selling on low discounts, reflecting exceptional performance or other special factors.

My conclusion is that buying a good name general trust on a 15 per cent discount looks a good bet on a two-to-three-year view. I am not persuaded that the time has yet come to switch back from blue chips to smaller companies.

A combination of low inflation and tough anti-inflationary policies (the combination we now seem to be heading for in the UK) is one that tends to favour larger companies.

One area where I think we could see positive action is in the emerging market sector. After the euphoria of the early 1990s, the performance of emerging markets has been dull over the past two years. It has become a very selective game, where you need to be invested in the right markets to have much chance of making a decent return. But could that now be about to change?

The analysts at Credit Lyonnais Laing are one team who think there is now good value to be found in some of the general emerging market trusts, and I am inclined to agree with them. Discounts here are mostly over 10 per cent and the outlook for the sector is more positive than for some time, with price/earnings ratios down from their stratospheric level to around 14 times on average. They could be one bright spot in an otherwise still unexciting sector outlook.

Don't take it for granted

Make your money last beyond freshers' week. By Rachel Fixsen

Freedom is one of the best things about student life. Often away from home for the first time, you can party as late as you like, sometimes set your own timetable and choose how to spend your money. But getting mixed in money problems spoils things.

As hundreds of thousands of former 'A' level students prepare to sample college life, many are likely to walk a financial tightrope. Even in London, where grants are highest, they will only have just over £4,200 of grant and loan a year to keep the wolf from the door. More than one in six students drop out of courses because of money problems.

"Being short of money can become all-encompassing to the extent that it affects your work and social life," says Lorna Fowle, undergraduate at University College London. "People are always talking about it."

So getting as much help as you can with your money is essential if you are to make the most of university. Banks are vying for student custom, keen to get their hands on grant cheques and secure future high earners as clients.

Midland Bank offers one of the best deals for students in the coming academic year. Those who open a current account with Midland can have an interest-free overdraft of £750 in their first year, £1,000 in their second and £1,250 in their third.

You also get £50 cash or a four-year student railcard, and earn 2.25 per cent interest on any credit balances you are lucky enough to have.

Barclays has yet to give details of this year's student package, but last year it offered an interest-free overdraft of £1,000 for year one, £1,250 in the second year and £1,500 in the third year of a course. It was handing out £25 to students opening an account, with another £25 for anyone who signed up for a Barclaycard as well. Credit interest was paid at 2 per cent.

Student loans are a fact of life for undergraduates without sponsorship or parents with the money and will to help them out. A full student grant for the first academic year is £2,160 for those living in London in the coming year, and this can be supplemented with a student loan of up to £2,085.

According to Barclays' latest survey,

students' average debts have risen by a quarter this year to £2,475, including £453 of bank borrowings. But though students tend to be an educated bunch, their poor grasp of basic money management lies at the root of their problems, says NatWest.

School-leavers do not really understand the financial demands of university life. Only after graduation does it become clear to many students how much debt they have built up, it says.

"The major issue isn't how many free gifts banks have on offer but how you're going to help students look after their money," says NatWest.

The bank already invests £1m in a schools money management pro-

gramme, and is launching a guide to university life including advice on how to manage your finances.

NatWest's interest-free overdraft for students this year is a flat £1,000 for the first three years, rising for the fourth and fifth years. It gives £35 in cash to account openers and pays 2 per cent interest on credit balances.

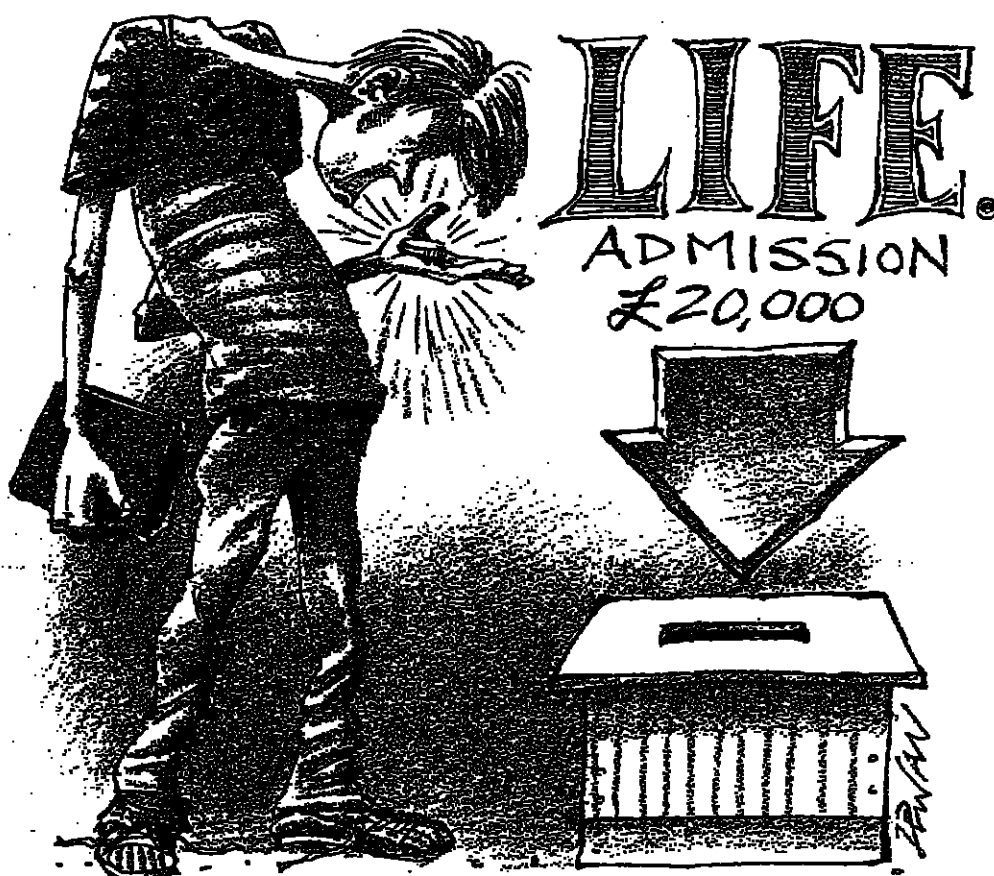
Students can run into financial difficulties in many ways, the National Union of Students says. Some arrive at college only to find their grant cheque has not arrived. Budgets are often stretched when students find themselves having to move into expensive accommodation.

"If you do get a full grant, it might

seem like a lot of money," an NUS spokeswoman says. "You go out quite a lot in freshers' week, and this can leave you stuck for the rest of the year."

If you do find yourself penniless, your first port of call should be your college or university welfare adviser. Access funds, one-off grants of up to £500 for particularly hard-up students and administered by the college, may still be available.

A third of all students resort to working part-time. "Some part-time jobs can help your CV, but they're generally muck jobs," the NUS spokeswoman says. "Avoid late-night jobs in bars – and ones where you might miss lectures or tutorials."



Useful numbers for student accounts

Barclays Bank - 0800 400100
Lloyds Bank - 0800 147799
Midland Bank - 0800 180180
Co-operative Bank - 0345 252000
Bank of Scotland - 0500 313111

Royal Bank of Scotland - 0800 121121
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National Westminster Bank - 0171-726 1000
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Credit tax axe moves goal posts

All change: Institutions grope for new income strategy in the wake of Brown's bombshell

Other funds available from S&P include a Premier Equity Income fund, which has an 80/20 investment ratio between equities and fixed interest bonds and gilts. This currently has a yield of 4.4 per-

The S&P approach to income generation means, in effect, a further turn away from the value-based approach adopted by many fund managers, who have been primarily concerned with good stock-picking to find high-yielding shares with good capital growth prospects. Not all investment houses agree with this approach.

Vivian Bazalgette, managing director at M&G Investment Management, one of the UK's largest fund managers, says equities still offer good opportunities for a steadily increasing income stream.

"Our income funds will continue to satisfy the demand for income over time, as we have done before," he says. "That is the advantage of equities over fixed interest investments."

But Mr Bazalgette admits: "The abolition of tax credits is bad for all equities. It makes them less attractive compared to fixed-interest investments."

"Clearly, there is a need for investors to look at fixed-interest products as part of an overall mix. But equities will continue to offer the oppor-

Mr Bazalgette warns that any side effect of rising interest rates will be to reduce the opportunity for rising income levels. M&G will maintain no income distribution from its funds at about 4 per cent.

est rates is that long-term yields from fixed-interest investments may fall – while their value rises – as markets become convinced that a suc-

Meanwhile, not all high yielding stocks are affected equally, with stronger ones

including many utilities companies at present, still able to deliver good income coupled with strong capital growth.

Despite M&G's approach, some managers believe that

over the long term, the effect of the Chancellor's Budget will be to slowly strangle the high-yield, low-growth strategy previously adopted by man-

Bill Mott, head of securities at Credit Suisse, says in an interview this week in *Money Marketing*, the magazine for financial institutions, that

If so, investing for income

The need to review one's investments to fit in with M

month bond, where rates are up from 6.3 to 7 per cent.

Framlington is launching a Financial and Health PEP, specialising in medical

percentage point discount on the 5.5 per cent initial charge levied on the fund. Annual charges are 1.5 per cent. Call 0345 775511

The Share Centre, an execution-only broking service, has teamed up with Family Assurance to offer a

free selling service for windfall building society and insurance company shares, as long as they are reinvested in the society's products. Ca

Prudential has increased the rates paid on its 60-day Notice Account to 7.2 per

cent gross on balances of £10,000 or over. Minimum balances of £5,000 will receive 6.2 per cent gross. Call 0800 000222.

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[illegible]

Invest from an armchair

Property is one solution for someone with a nest egg who is averse to risk



Home comforts: a local estate agent could be the first port of call for people who are unsure about what type of property to invest in

NAME: Sandra Allichurch
AGE: 46
OCCUPATION: Local government manager
THE ISSUE: Sandra recently divorced and, as part of her settlement, she received a lump sum of £100,000. She is cautious, cannot take risks and her money has been tied up in a building society for some time.

A friend has suggested buying a flat or a small house with slightly over half the money and renting it out. Sandra would like to know the pros and cons of such a move.

THE ADVISER: Andrew Reeves FCA, proprietor of Andrew Reeves & Co, a property letting and managing agency, 4 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EA (0181-464 8566). Also a national council member of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (01923 896555).

THE ADVICE: "My first advice is that Sandra should not put all her eggs in one basket. Her idea that some £60,000 should be invested in residential property for letting purposes is a sound one.

Having made a decision to invest in property, she should first decide whether she wishes to simply use her own capital or raise additional funds through a mortgage.

With her own capital, she could buy one or perhaps two properties, and expect to receive a rental return of about 10 or 12 per cent on capital employed. After running expenses such as insurance, agents, fees, repairs and maintenance, her net return is likely to be 7 to 8 per cent per annum, before tax. It is important she takes expert advice locally before buying a property, to ensure she makes the right choice.

It may not be her idea of a "dream cottage", but should be chosen instead for its appeal to tenants. It should be convenient to shops, schools and transport links, in good condition, preferably with modern kitchen and bathroom – and economical to maintain.

Whether the property should be furnished or provided with the basics – carpets, curtains and some kitchen appliances – should be decided after conferring with the letting agent. While furnished is the norm, some areas are experiencing greater demand for unfurnished properties.

To fully equip and furnish a two-bedroomed property might cost around £3,000 but the ben-

efits can be higher rent levels, longer occupancy per tenant, and therefore less risk of void periods with each change of tenants.

Being in full-time employment, Sandra is unlikely to want to adopt a "hands-on" approach. Agents not only find tenants, but also collect the rent and manage the property. This typically costs 12.5-15 per cent of the rent.

Sandra has the option of raising further funds by way of investment mortgages available under the ARLA Buy-to-Let scheme, and of purchasing, say, four or five properties rather than two. The main attraction here is capital appreciation. By dividing her own funds into smaller amounts of £12,000 or £15,000 and raising twice as much again, she will increase the gain threefold. A 5 per cent growth in property

values would amount to a 15 per cent capital gain for investors "geared up" in this way.

Buy-to-Let mortgage lenders, including household names such as Halifax, Woolwich and NatWest, as well as specialist lenders Mortgage Trust, Mortgage Express and Paragon, will lend up to 75 per cent or even 80 per cent of a property's value.

It would, however, be prudent to borrow no more than 65 per cent to keep interest payments down and provide a buffer against future rises in rates. Interest currently charged is typically 0.5 per cent above standard variable home-loan rates. All lenders also offer a fixed rate for anything from three to 10 years. The usual multiple-of-income calculations will be made, but rental income from the property

being bought is taken into account. The costs of the ARLA Buy-to-Let scheme are typically £300 to £400, which includes valuation and arrangement fees. Legal fees to buy the property should be no more than 0.5 per cent of the purchase price.

The main difference in the financial position if mortgage funds are raised is that most of the net rental income goes to meet monthly interest payments. If Sandra is looking for a regular monthly income from her investment, then this would not be the route to take.

However, it is very tax-efficient to borrow to buy a property to let, as all interest payments are fully allowable against income tax. Set up correctly, it is possible to minimise or avoid altogether income tax payments on rental income by balancing allowable outgoings against income. All running expenses of the property are generally allowable, with only capital expenses being excluded. However, a wear-and-tear tax allowance of about 10 per cent of the annual rent is available for furnished rented property.

Capital gains tax is payable at the marginal rate of income tax when the property is eventually sold, although this should be less than expected, since gains are adjusted for inflation by reference to the RPI over the period of the investment. For instance, if a property increases by 10 per cent over a period in which inflation was 5 per cent, capital gains are only paid on the 5 per cent difference in value.

Clearly, property investors must accept that they may be subject to CGT, unlike some other investments. Equally, property investment is often made because a "bricks-and-mortar" investment is more appropriate to certain people's risk profiles.

She should bear in mind that, just as with other investments, the value of properties can go down as well as up. The appeal of property investment to Sandra might be that she will own an asset situated in her local area which she can "walk past". It will provide an income every year for as long as it is held, or if purchased on a mortgage, will pay for itself over, say, 15 or 20 years, after which the additional income will supplement a pension throughout her retirement years. Managed correctly, property ownership is very much an "armchair" investment.

Once, investment strategists would have had an additional asset class to build into their allocation models. Gold used to be taken very seriously as an investment. As recently as 1988 my colleagues and I thought it carried sufficient investor appeal to launch a fund, the main aim of which was to profit from the fluctuations in the gold price. I doubt we would get such an investment off the ground today.

The news earlier this week that one of South Africa's largest mines had been mothballed brought into sharp focus how poor the recent performance of gold has been.

It was not a good week for gold all round. Australia announced a massive reduction in its reserves.

This follows fairly hefty sales from eastern European governments, anxious to finance their restructuring, not to mention destocking from developed countries. Then there is the risk that Germany might use gold to help it reach the Maastricht criteria for EMU. We need more buyers.

Which is where we hit problems. Gold has industrial uses and remains the cornerstone of jewellery manufacture. But governments have been the biggest buyers – and investors seeking a safe haven in times of turmoil.

We're short on turmoil these days. The collapse of the Soviet Union has led to a decline in tension, whilst fewer spats in the Middle East have also reduced the demand for gold. Even the Chinese seem to have lost their appetite.

Is this the end of the road for gold as a serious investment? Speculators clearly think so. It seems traders could be short of as much as 8 million ounces in the commodity markets.

The belief is that central banks will never again return as large-scale buyers. The financial markets are, after all, reasonably secure these days.

Financial assets, as a consequence, look the best bet for the future. And financial assets pay dividends, unlike gold.

Do not forget, either, that investors look backwards



Brian Tora

Gold may have lost its lustre, but retains its attraction as a safe haven in times of turmoil

when choosing where to place their money. Gold has been a poor home for cash for the past 15 years. The FT Gold Mining Index is down 50 per cent from its peak.

But things could change. First of all, government-inspired selling is not universal. India, Japan and other Far Eastern countries continue to mop up the odd ingot or two. Indeed, Japan indicated recently that it might lose its appetite for US Bonds, leading to speculation that gold is perhaps the only available alternative.

It may be that we need another serious conflict to restimulate interest, but it is too early to write off gold as a serious asset class. Geoff Campbell, one of the team that runs the Gold and General Fund at Mercury Asset Management, does not believe that gold is finished. This fund is 80 per cent invested in the companies that deliver it onto the world market.

Investors concerned that financial markets have scaled unsustainable heights might well tuck away a gold investment. And many think that it is not all over yet.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee and may be contacted on 0171-655 4000



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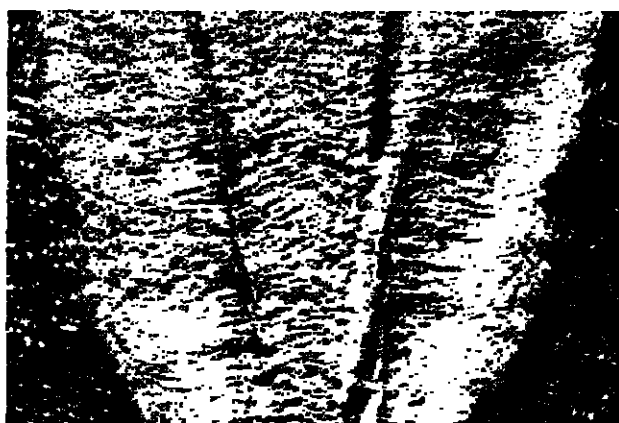
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This dread donkey must be dropped

John Chapman says critical illness cover in the UK may be fatally flawed

What was the fastest-growing product of 1996? The answer is critical illness cover, or "dread disease" insurance, as it was once known. Last year some 470,000 people insured themselves against getting a critical illness such as cancer, heart attack or stroke, or even some 30 other dread diseases, and surviving for 28 days.

Critical illness cover (CIC) met with a mixed reception when introduced in the UK in 1986. One marketing director who rejected the product confessed to feeling like the manager who turned down the Beatles. But there is a sting in the tail. It may well be rational to consider this protection. Yet, when salesmen reel off long lists of up to 34 nasty diseases, fear may become the dominant factor. Concern may then be allayed by the prospect of lump sum pay-outs reaching £500,000 or more if you pay enough premiums. The combination of fear and greed is pretty potent.

How easy is it to choose which products offer the best value for money? Of some 75 products in a recent survey, 25 covered between 10 to 19 illnesses, another 25 covered 20 to 29, and a further 25 covered 30 to 34. Yet about 95 per cent of claims arise on only five - cancer, heart attacks, strokes, multiple sclerosis and coronary artery bypass surgery. Are the extra illnesses covered marketing gimmicks?

Even when policies cover the same number of illnesses there is no simple choice. The make-up of illnesses differs. For example, Sun Life and Commercial Union have policies covering 23 illnesses. Of these 19 are common to both policies. Sun Life then covers

Alzheimer's, Aids through blood transfusions, loss of independent existence, and Total Permanent Disability (defined as unable to carry out certain activities of daily living). How does one choose - by tossing a coin?

Does CIC meet real needs? A lump sum may meet debts such as mortgages, but it is not the best way of replacing income, or providing for care. The greatest concern, however, arises over the "widows(ers) and children" problem brought out in the OFT report last year. More than 80 per cent of CIC sales are on an "accelerated either/or basis". After a critical illness payout, no payout can be made to dependents on the death of the policyholder. Dependents will not then get the benefits once envisaged for them. Many policyholders may be under the illusion that they have both types of cover.

This problem has been recognised in other countries where critical illness cover has been promoted. In the US, the insurance authorities have drawn up an Accelerated Benefits Model Act which requires the consent of the beneficiaries to any acceleration of benefits.

What are the UK companies doing about this problem? No company has introduced a buy-back policy. Peter Manion of Munich Re says progress has been disappointing. Some companies say buy-back policies would be too costly.

It is also possible they might consider that re-casting policies could be viewed as an acknowledgement of faults in policies already sold. But can they continue to sell acceleration policies without the protection other countries recognise as necessary? There really is trouble ahead.

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Yorkshire BS	0181 296 500	4.99 to 10/10/97	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.19 to 10/10/97	90	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
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Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	5.25 for 3 years	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Yorkshire BS	0181 296 500	6.25 for 5 years	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
First Time Buyers Fixed Rates				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.99 to 10/10/97	85	Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
Yorkshire BS	0181 296 500	5.99 to 10/10/97	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Universal BS	0800 281 498	7.15 to 10/10/97	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
First Time Buyers Variable Rates				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Universal BS	0800 281 498	1.55 to 10/10/97	85	Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
Yorkshire BS	0181 296 500	4.89 to 10/10/97	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	6.89 to 10/10/97	85	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
PERSONAL LOANS				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Unsecured				Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
Northern Rock BS	0500 123145	12.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Direct Line	0181 669 9999	14.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Yorkshire BS	0181 296 500	14.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Secured (Second Charge)				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Yorkshire BS	0181 296 500	9.99	100	Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 123145	10.00	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
First Direct	0345 100000	10.50	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
OVERNIGHTS				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Unsecured				Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
Monie National	0500 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Alliance & Leicester	0500 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Bank of Scotland	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
CREDIT CARDS				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Unsecured				Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
Capital One Bank	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
BSA Advance	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Co-operative Bank	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Gold Cards				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Co-operative Bank	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
BSA Advance	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 123145	10.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
STORE CARDS				INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS			
Unsecured				Standard Bank	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%
John Lewis	01234 56789	1.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
Mark & Spencer	01234 56789	1.99	100	0500 454560	Instant Access	6.15%	85
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Sharon Davey
in my week

School reunions are attractive to the brave and successful only. You skive off if you haven't achieved a fair bit since failing your maths A-level twice

For school bell, substitute door bell of 10 Acacia Avenue. One pristine, parquet-floored parlour is transformed into a sweaty sixth-form common room as the class of '72 gather, giggling and whispering at grey hair and no hair and time's other cheeky tricks.

The hormones may have dampened down in a quarter century, but this is still a place of secrets and revelations, and a *frisson* of trepidation. For school reunions are attractive to the brave and successful only. You skive off if you haven't achieved a fair bit since failing your maths A-level twice in succession.

And this turns out to be a room full of achievers. Lecturers, poets, journalists, equal opportunities advisers - a working-class class turned middle-class, every one.

Their headmaster would have been so proud. Except, of course, he wasn't invited. It is remarkable how, even among a group of well-adjusted adults, the mere mention of a certain Mr Chips induces a distant, haunted expression.

I can think of nothing worse than a head-on memory trip back to those ghastly days of spinster teachers more hairy than their male counterparts, of puppy fat and Clearasil and the stomach-churning fear of mortality. What a joke it is now, to think you were terrified of dying at least a decade before gravity begins pulling your body downwards to the inevitable.

But as I am merely accompanying Other Half to this 25th anniversary nostalgia fest, and as I was still in ankle socks and big knickers when this lot were about to launch themselves, in loons and tanktops, on the

big, bad world outside, I am smirkingly happy to observe. It seems people have changed remarkably little, with the exception of the bank manager who twice weaved his way incognito past the social worker, his teenage pash for two groping years, so drastically has he receded and protruded in all the wrong places.

Otherwise, Head Girl will be head girl till the day she dies, all shiny and spick and span in navy blue ensemble with tastefully contrasting neckerchief. And mellow yellow hippy man may have lopped six inches off his hair, for mid-life propriety's sake, but he still grabs the Acacia Avenue common-



room guitar and engages the class in a cross-legged Beatles singalong session. The hostess, now as then the class's party fixer, tells me I look gorgeous, bless her. How rare and how refreshing for a woman to express such fruity appreciation of another. Usually, it's "That dress is very flattering", which tends to mean "You're fat, but it hides a multitude of sins." Or is that just my paranoia? Whatever, I'm particularly pleased because said dress is at least five years old. Not that it is suddenly

back in high fashion - being a plain old chain-store shift, it was hardly cutting-edge in the first place - just that it has taunted me from the murky depths of my wardrobe for the past three years. "Pah, you couldn't squeeze a thigh into me if you tried!"

So, the dreaded Flab-busters class is really working. Yes, it is back to class again, this time to be preached at by a svelte teacher who appears to have lost her ability to hear, along with the requisite 25lbs. The bizarre, one-sided conversation goes something like this:

"So then, have you been good this week?"

"Well, actually, I porked out on two bags of..."

"You'll never guess what, I bumped into my ex-husband yesterday, and he hardly recognised me. He's taking me for a night on the town, have to watch the G&Ts, though."

This is intended to be inspirational, along with the groovy pair of size 16 jeans that teacher has discarded, lizard-like, and which she insists on holding aloft each week, like some unholy offertory.

Give me the bread and wine, I say. And yet I continue to pay my £3.99 a go not to be heard. Something to do with the temporary halting of the march towards middle age and all its spread, I suppose.

A slim chance of that, as Mr Bank Manager will ascertain. But there is always cause for optimism. Just think. Sweet Maggie May, who had us casting off the responsible years with such gay abandon, must by now be eligible for her bus pass.

Futurology: futile but fun

We have developed, according to Mark Lawson in *A Brief History of the Future* (Radio 4, Saturday), a range of techniques for dealing with permanent uncertainty - among them, sermons on the resurrection, life insurance and Mystic Meg. Leaving aside the question of whether Mystic Meg counts as a technique - more a desperate plea for notice that he doesn't mention pension plans, surely the most insidious reassurance technique we possess.

A degree of shakiness about the future is integral to the whole notion of insurance: you may fall off a cliff, warns the salesman - shouldn't you invest in a mattress, just to be safe? It plays on our insecurities. The pension plan, on the other hand, waves insecurity aside. True, you are told to bear in mind that stocks can go down, as well as up - that the size and fluidity of this financial cushion may vary - but it assumes that things will carry on roughly as they are today. Perhaps this is a sensible working assumption, but it leaves me uneasy. I have always



Robert Hanks
the week on radio

wanted to ask a pension salesman, but have never dared, what happens in the event of the collapse of Western civilisation. What's needed is a policy - the Branch Davidian PEP, say - that will convert your accumulated funds into, say, basic agricultural equipment, medical supplies, small arms plus a few animal traps and geiger counters.

This is, I realise, an unfashionable view. The theme of *A Brief History of the Future* is the way that our visions of tomorrow have altered. The first agrarian societies thought of the future as pretty much more

or the same: the Greeks thought it was a process of slow decline from a Golden Age (with some hope of either recurrence, or renewal following conflagration); Enlightenment man, under Newton's spell, thought the future was rationally calculable.

This first programme (three more to come) barely had the time to skim over these fundamental changes; it didn't even touch on the extraordinary see-saw of ideas about the future that has characterised our own century. Just in the last decade and a half, for instance, Graham Swift's marvellous novel *Waterland*, published in 1983, has become faintly embarrassing to read, with its passages of paranoia about impending nuclear apocalypse and history approaching its end. After 1989, by contrast, it was possible to suggest that history was coming to an end for opposite reasons - that there were no significant conflicts to disturb the orderly procession of events.

You can't blame Mark Lawson for omitting all this. But you can criticise *A Brief History of the Future* for being a

little too keen on brevity, and for getting a diversity of expert testimony at the expense of coherence and depth. The only real moments of gravitas came at the beginning, with Bryan Magee issuing solemn warnings of the dangers of addiction to the future: "People... can go future mad. And often have."

For proof of this, you only had to turn to *Beyond the Millennium* (Radio 4, Monday), in which Sharna McDonald asks thinkers how life will be in 2100. Last week, Professor Chris Hables-Gray was looking forward rather gleefully to future warfare - soldiers in exoskeletons with jet-packs on their backs. "Brilliant" weapons which choose their own targets, and so forth. This week, Kevin Murray declared that the city of the future will be a much nicer place than it is now - fewer cars, less crime, better facilities. Murray, particularly, seemed absurdly certain and optimistic; but perhaps that's the only way of making futurology bearable. However grim the future may be when we get there, *Beyond the Millennium* at least makes it fun for now.

The Portillo guide to restoration

Love Me Do (ITV, Sat) finds *The Shane Ritchie Experience* masquerading under a pseudonym. Most people's experience of *The Shane Ritchie Experience* was fairly undiluted revulsion, but somehow the cockney sparra lives to fight another day. The entertainment has now been toned down. This means it is merely mildly appalling, as opposed to dangerously so. It's still a game show in which betrothed couples compete to get to the altar, but this time the hoops through which they have to throw themselves dole out humiliation in more manageable portions.

Each couple is asked about each other, and they only score points if their answers tally. Among this week's contestants were Colin, a bald firefighter, whose best mate is called Colin, and his Spanish bride-to-be Anxone. Shane, whose mind is not as broad as his suits, gave us his dazzling array of jokes stereotyping the Spanish. Anxone, impressively refraining from acting out that stereotype, missed the chance to clack his *cajones* in a couple of castanets. Then there was Clare and Rob, a ruthlessly shallow couple from Nuneaton. (Shane does a very handy Nuneaton accent too). You knew they were going to win because, deploying a gameshow savvy borne of thousands of hours on the sofa, they skilfully trained all their



Jasper Rees
the week on television

answers on the lowest common denominator. "What first attracted Rob to Clare?" asked Shane. "Bum," said Rob. "Bum," agreed Clare. On such fundamental things are marriages based. Then there was Darren, betrothed by what you can only assume was predestination, to the lovely Karen. Eliminated early on, they could justifiably claim to be the victims of discrimination, because Shane didn't take the piss out of their estuarine accents (being exactly the same as his own).

You can see this game catching on at house parties in Gloucestershire. Camilla (CS, Sun), what first attracted you to Charles? "His title," says Camilla. "My intellect," disagrees Charles. When was your first kiss? "On his honeymoon," says Camilla. "After her husband's stag night," says

Charles. Charles, what had habit of yours does Camilla find most exasperating? "Talking out of the side of my mouth," says Charles. "His tendency to cancel our romantic holidays at the last minute because of press furore over Channel 5 documentaries that no one watched anyway because they can't receive the signal," says Camilla.

Camilla was an unexpected treat. There were approximately six shaky minutes of the reclusive adulteress on film, but much fun to be had meeting all her pals. The chief secretary of the Parker-Bowles fan club is a redoubtable cove called Charles Benson, whose proud bulldog head sits on a neck roughly the diameter of one of the Queen's greedier corgis. He was keen to establish that just because the Prince of Wales's ex-wife is extraordinarily beautiful, we shouldn't overlook the charms of the woman who may be his future wife. "I have always found her extremely attractive," he said. "And she's also very sexy." So that's all right then.

To be fair, the documentary's script tended to agree with him. "In the hot summers of the early 1970s," it explained, "Smith's Lawn began to sizzle with sexual tension." (What, incidentally, did that illustrious sward do to earn such a humdrum name?)

Most of the sizzling took place between Camilla, by this time married, and Charles. At one dance they were seen kissing openly. The programme failed in its journalistic duty to ask witnesses what kind of kissing it was. Are we talking discreet pecks, or your basic sarnie? It would also be quite nice to find out precisely why Andrew Parker Bowles, with customary good grace continued to make Charles welcome. There must be some reason other than "good grace" which allowed him to tolerate his own cuckoldry.

Michael Portillo, who recently underwent a humiliation every bit as bad as anything on *The Shane Ritchie Experience*, returned to the public eye with *One Foot in the Past* (BBC2, Wed). Notionally a ramble round a pile in Bucks, it was really a guided tour round the guide. Portillo couched his admiration for the owner in terms that afforded an unrivalled vista on his own unaccomplished ambitions. Having restored the house from ruin, it was now a monument to the owner's time on earth. "Imagine being able to claim this much," fantasised the former Defence Secretary. He was particularly impressed with the staircase. "Look at that staircase," he marvelled. "There is nothing supporting it at all. It takes one to know one."



Whatever happened to... crop circles

The second coming? This time of year - late July, early August - is when circles in the corn appeared in the late Eighties. Some 5,000 cropped up, often in ancient sites of supernatural interest such as Silbury Hill and the Iron Age forts of the Ridgeway. At the peak of the excitement this caused, a "cerealologist" (cereal-

spotter), Pat Delgado, wrote an instant best-seller called *Circular Evidence*, which was followed by an avalanche of explanatory theories ranging from ley lines and ruttng deer to aliens and magnetic fields.

UFO or OAP? In 1991, though, things fell apart. One Doug Bower announced that

most of the patterns had been made by him, equipped with some planks of wood, balls of string and a torch or two. Delgado reacted badly: "We have all been conned. Thousands of lives are going to be wrecked over this."

"It got beyond a joke," admitted Bower. "Whatever I did, there was always someone ready with an explanation. If

people want to believe in alien beings rather than a 69-year-old man from Southampton, that's their lookout."

The devil's scythe? The circles had appeared before, though. Recently a privately owned pamphlet from 1678 came up for auction. It told how strange, spiralling circles had appeared one August

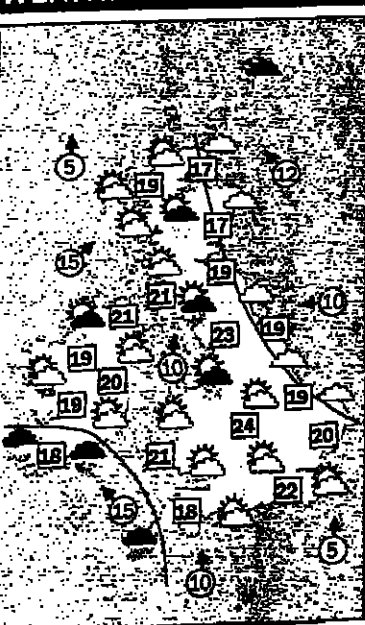
night in a field in Hertfordshire. Every straw was "placed... with that exactness that it would have taken up above an Age for any Man to perform". It was illustrated with a woodcut of the field being mowed with a scythe by the devil. Locals had seen the field "to be all of a Flame, to the great consternation of those that beheld it".

Its hour come round at last? The flame is still burning. The media has become disillusioned, but the circles still appear. It was illustrated with a woodcut of the field being mowed with a scythe by the devil. Locals had seen the field "to be all of a Flame, to the great consternation of those that beheld it".

and continuing into the summer. The site's aerial pictures of swirls, spirals, gyres, interlocking lines and even triangles, all made from flattened corn, are stunning. They may be the devil's work, alien landing sites, even a secret known only to the MoD - but they sure are beautiful.

Tom Hampson

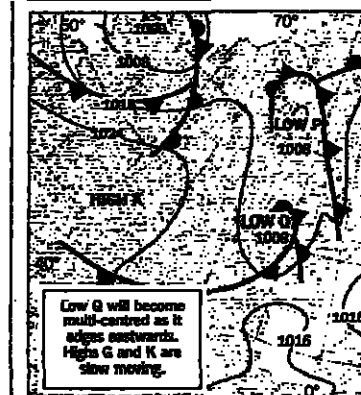
WEATHER



General Situation and Outlook
Most parts of England and Wales can expect some reasonable spells of sultry warm sunshine, but a few scattered thundery showers may break out in the afternoon, and drizzly rain is likely to affect the south-west of England and Wales later. Showers and localised thunderstorms are likely over Scotland and Northern Ireland, but some places will escape the downpours and stay dry. The east coast of Scotland will be plagued by mist and low cloud throughout the day.

Tomorrow, most parts of England and Wales will be warm and humid with sunny spells, but heavy showers and a few thunderstorms will develop away from the misty North Sea coasts. Scotland and Northern Ireland will also have sunny spells and a few heavy showers, but the far north-west may miss out and stay reasonably sunny. Early next week it will be unsettled in southern Britain with heavy showers and thunderstorms. Further north and west there should be fewer showers and better sunny spells.

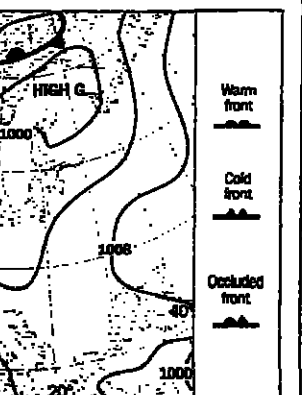
The British Isles



WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT): c, cloudy; f, fair; fog; h, heavy; m, mist; rain; s, snow; sun, sunny; th, thunder; previous day's figure at local time.

Athens	c 30 86	Florence	c 29 84	New York	c 25 77
Auckland	c 10 50	Frankfurt	c 25 77	Nice	c 24 75
B. Aires	c 13 55	Geneva	c 23 73	Nicosia	c 31 88
Bangkok	c 31 88	Gibraltar	c 26 79	Paris	c 27 81
Barcelona	c 24 75	Helsinki	c 17 63	Prague	c 22 72
Beirut	c 29 84	Hong Kong	c 30 85	Rijad	c 39 102
Bombay	c 24 75	Istanbul	c 27 81	Riyadh	c 39 102
Brussels	c 25 77	Jerusalem	c 26 79	Rome	c 25 77
Buenos Aires	c 21 70	Los Angeles	c 23 73	Stockholm	c 17 63
Cairo	c 32 90	Madrid	c 27 81	Sydney	c 13 55
Cape Town	c 17 63	Manila	c 27 81	Taipei	c 22 72
Casablanca	c 24 75	Moscow	c 27 81	Tokyo	c 22 72
Chertsey	c 8 46	Perth	c 27 81	Vienna	c 17 63
Copenhagen	c 15 59	Wellington	c 24 75	Washington	c 28 82
Corfu	c 27 81	Winnipeg	c 19 66	Zurich	c 22 72
Darwin	c 29 84				
Dhahran	c 41 106				

Europe and The World



High Tides

	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	7.21	6.4	19.30	6.1
Liverpool	4.26	8.0	16.58	7.7
Aberdeen	0.06	11.0	12.29	10.5
Hull	11.45	7.5	-	-
Greenwich	5.39	3.2	18.27	2.8
Dun Laoghaire	5.18	3.5	17.48	3.4

AA Roadwatch

Surrey, M25 J8-10.
Various restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and the A3 as major widening work continues. (until further notice).

Bristol, M5 J18-19.
Contrailow in operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush-hour delays (until August '98).

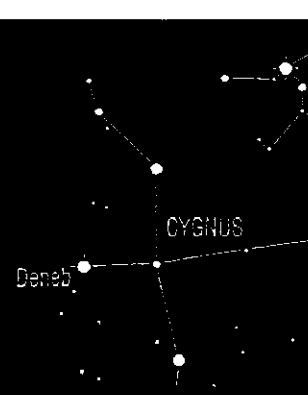
Nottinghamshire, A52 Beeston.
Major roadworks on Derby Road. Expect delays between the Sherwin Arms and the Priory Roundabout (until September).

West Yorkshire, M1 J47.
Major long-term roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions in place. Expect time delays on the M1, M62 and Dewsbury Road (until the 15th of September).

Abertawe, Anderson Drive is down to one lane each way between the Seaford Road roundabout and Queens Road for the continuing roadworks (until 7th August).

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 6336 404 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per minute at all times (inc VAT).

The Sky at Night



The bright constellation of Cygnus the Swan is one of the easiest star patterns to pick out, appearing high in the night sky throughout the summer months. Albireo is a noted double star, visible as a pair in binoculars.

Sun and Moon

Sun rises 4:57am
Sun sets 9:14pm
Moon rises 1:02pm
Moon sets 12:28am

Full moon: 20 July

Lighting up Times

Today	Tomorrow
London 9:14pm to 4:58am	London 9:13pm to 5:00am
Bristol 9:24pm to 5:07am	Bristol 9:23pm to 5:10am
Birmingham 9:26pm to 5:09am	Birmingham 9:25pm to 5:12am
Manchester 9:33pm to 5:16am	Manchester 9:32pm to 5:19am
Newcastle 9:40pm to 5:23am	Newcastle 9:39pm to 5:26am
Glasgow 9:56pm to 5:39am	Glasgow 9:55pm to 5:42am
Belfast 9:54pm to 5:37am	Belfast 9:53pm to 5:40am

Air Quality

Today	Tomorrow
London Good	London Good
Birmingham Good	Birmingham Good
Manchester Good	Manchester Good
Newcastle Good	Newcastle Good
Glasgow Good	Glasgow Good
Belfast Good	Belfast Good

Outlook for Today

Region	Forecast
London	Moderate Good
Wales	Good Moderate
C. England	Good Good
N. England	Good Good
Scotland	Moderate Good
N. Ireland	Good Good

High Tides

	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	7.21	6.4	19.30	6.1
Liverpool	4.26	8.0	16.58	7.7
Aberdeen	0.06	11.0	12.29	10.5
Hull	11.45	7.5	-	-
Greenwich	5.39	3.2	18.27	2.8
Dun Laoghaire	5.18	3.5	17.48	3.4

